



**Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 15th October 2011
at Red Lion Inn, Alvechurch**

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE)	BCA Chairman / BCA UIS Rep.
Paul Ibberson (PI)	BCA Treasurer
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Nick Williams (NW)	BCA Insurance Manager / Equipment & Techniques Officer
Graham Mollard (GM)	BCA Training Officer
Glenn Jones (GJ)	BCA Membership Administrator / CNCC Rep.
Jenny Potts (JP)	BCA Publication Sales / DCA Rep.
Chris Jewell (CJ)	BCA Media-Liaison Officer / Individual Member Rep.
Mike Clayton (MC)	BCA Newsletter Editor
Bob Mehew (BM)	BCA Rope-Test Officer
Ged Campion (GC)	BCA FSE Rep.
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Member Rep.
Bernie Woodley (BW)	Club Member Rep.
Owen Clarke (OC)	Club Member Rep.
Emma Porter (EP)	Club Member Rep. / BCRC Rep.
Mick Day (MD)	Individual Member Rep. / President
Mike McCombe (MM)	Cambrian CC Rep.
David Jean (DJe)	DCUC Rep.
Dave Checkley (DCh)	BCRA Chairman
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Rep.
Alan Finch (AF)	WPCST Rep.
Nigel Ball (NB)	CIC Panel Chair
Wayne Sheldon (WS)	DCA Treasurer
Chris Gibbs (CG)	

The meeting commenced at 10:30am.

1. Chairman's Welcome

AE welcomed Council members.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Idris Williams, Steve Holding, David Cooke, Clark Friend, Les Williams, Elsie Little, James Collings, Mark Williams and Faye Litherland.

3. Applications for Club Membership

GJ reported an application with the correct paperwork and payment from the Liverpool University Pothole Club.

Proposal: *to accept the Liverpool University Pothole Club as a Member Club.*

Prop: GJ, Sec: CJ *agreed unanimously*

4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 11th June 2011 (previously circulated)

Proposal: *to accept the Minutes from 11th June 2011 as a true record*

Prop: BM, Sec: GM *agreed unanimously*

5. Matters Arising for the Minutes of the last Council Meeting

Review of Action Log

Action Log 6 (*Bank Mandates*): Ongoing - see Treasurer's Report.

Action Log 36 (*Manual of Operations*): Ongoing – see Secretary's Report.

Action Log 54 (*Liaise with SUI*): Ongoing. NW is still waiting for an opportunity to arrange a face-to-face meeting.

Action Log 56 (*Flyer for 2016*): DW: The need for a flyer was superseded by a detailed Application Form that appeared somewhat out of the blue from the FSE. This was completed and submitted before the last FSE General Meeting. We are currently the only country to have submitted an application, but we need to wait until the closing date of 31st December to know for sure if we have been successful. Action Complete.

Action Log 57 (*Discussion Document*): Complete - see Membership Administrator's Report

Action Log 58 (*Victoria Cave*): DJu: Both BCA and BCRA wrote letters to the National Park and feedback indicates that this was useful in encouraging some action. Andrew Hinde (CNCC Conservation Officer) has encouraged us to write again. NW: has not yet done anything with BMC on this issue. Will happily pass this on, as his BMC contacts are with the Equipment Committee and might not be very useful on this issue. GM: YDNP Access & Conservation meet in November when it will be raised. AE: Could we write to BMC in the short term? GM: BMC are aware of it but the relevant committee only meet once a year in November. BM: Would a general letter from BCA be of benefit in backing up GM? GM: The pressure really needs to be put on the National Park. Should we alter Action 58 so that it refers to the National Park, rather than the BMC?

Action Log 64 (*Minutes Policy*): Complete - see Secretary's Report.

Action Log 67 (*List of Useful Contacts*): CJ: Is slowly building a list of useful contacts to pass on in his Media-Liaison role, but views this as something that will go on indefinitely. Was there an intention in this Action that this list be linked with the list of Court-Ready technical experts? GM: Wanted a list of people who are acknowledged experts in their field and are willing to act as a list of technical experts in a Courtroom. This list is under development and GM is happy with the progress. GM: A little concerned that if we have incidents with qualified people, that we are not necessarily having the right people commenting to the media. CJ: If the media phone CJ, then CJ puts them in contact with the appropriate BCA body. For rescues this is BCRC. CJ has only had two rescue-related phone calls in the time he has been doing his job.

Action Log 68 (*Member Logo*): Logo complete. DW has uploaded to the website and has given download address to GJ, who will send it to all 2012 Club members on renewal in January. Is the meeting happy that this is appropriate? JP: Should it change annually with 2012, 2013 on it? CJ: This is probably over-complicating things. BM: When a Club does not renew its annual membership, GJ could ask them to discontinue use of the Member Logo. DW: Has done a search on the internet for our logo and found a small number of LCMLA T/As using it. Is this something we feel they should be entitled to do? GM: In the past GM has always asked T/As to remove it if he has found them using it. CJ: Is there a need for a logo that such providers can use? GM: This is a good idea. A logo saying "Approved Provider" would be helpful.

Action 79: CJ to create "BCA Approved Provider" logo for use by BCA T/As, then pass it to MW for distribution.

Action Log 70 (*E&T Resolutions*): Complete – see E&T Officer's Report.

Action Log 72 (*DCUC Registry Co-ordinator*): Roger King will be DCUC's contact.

Action Log 74 (*IT Services Group*): DW: This is ongoing. Some background work has been completed and we now need to get together to discuss the Terms of Reference of the group. This should be ready for the January meeting. GJ: Is Membership Services going to be part of this? AE: Nothing is likely to change the good service we currently give to our members. NW: Part of the remit of this group will probably be to ensure that BCA is in a position to continue to provide its existing service levels in the event that a key person moves on or dies.

Action Log 75 (*Outdoor Show Contacts List*): Not done. EP: How long should this remain an action? The event was 8 months ago. AE: Should we be thinking about next year's Outdoor Show? DW: JC reported earlier in the year that he was not willing to organise next year's event. CJ: Believes the main issue for JC was needing to take 2 days off work for the event itself. EP: Next year's Show is 24th-26th February at the NEC. If we do, then we need to follow up on the list of people who are interested in trying caving. BM: We need a volunteer who is willing to manage the actual running of the event. BP: Is quite prepared to be there on the Thursday and Friday. AE: So will AE, including delivery of the cave. CJ: Last year we paid nothing for floor space, but did have to pay a commercial rate for electrics. This is probably unavoidable because of the setup of the event. We need JC to be willing to do the background legwork. GM: In the past CICs have volunteered to attend and have also been involved after the event in running beginners' caving trips. CJ: That would be very helpful. Suspects JC wasn't aware of this last year and felt it was rude to ask. GJ: Is there a crib sheet for running future events? This would be very helpful.

Action Log 76 (*Write to RCCs about £5m Liability Increase*): Completed - see Insurance Manager's report.

Action Log 77 (*Check Policies for appointees*): Completed – no need to add anyone else.

Officers’ Reports

6. Chairman’s Report (*written report previously circulated*)

AE: BCA received an invite to take 5 people to the Palace to represent Cave Explorers. AE was asked to nominate suitable people and had only about 3 days in which to do this. After as much consultation as possible, AE came up with Andy Eavis, Dave Brook, Pete Smart, Rick Stanton and Dave Checkley. Unfortunately AE had very little time to discuss this more widely. It is possible that not all those nominated will get an invitation. [*Post-Meeting Note: all have now received an invitation.*]

CJ: That’s quite an “old” list.

AE: This was very much at the request of the Palace, who actually put an age limit on it, as others will get further chances in the future.

Proposal: *to accept the Chairman’s Report*

Prop: GM Sec: CJ *agreed unanimously*

7. Secretary’s Report (*written report previously circulated*)

Manual of Operations

DW: Is it the feeling of the meeting that what has been circulated is broadly the right balance between detail and brevity and, therefore, generally along the right lines?

JP: Yes.

DW: Would like to go through each area in sequence and agree it. In the event of concerns, then in the interests of avoiding long discussions today DW would prefer to take things away, consult by e-mail before amending the sections accordingly and presenting them to the following meeting. DW has already been convinced during discussions with Council members over the last week that further work is needed on the Complaints Policy, so is withdrawing that from today’s discussion.

BM: Complaints and The Disciplinary Process are inextricably linked. Can both be withdrawn and looked at together please?

DW: Yes.

Section 2

agreed

Section 2.1 Annual Appointments

DW: This is a slight change in established procedure in that all appointments have traditionally been made by Council. However, it is proposed that in future some be rubber stamped by Council on the recommendation of the appropriate Special Committee. This seems a more sensible approach. *Agreed*

Section 2.2 Council Members

DW: So far Council has not ever clearly defined its voting structure. The Constitution is unclear in this respect. It is clear from sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.4 that all of Executive, all Officers and all Group and Individual reps, as well as Regional Council and Constituent Body reps, have a vote. Section 6.6 states that “Council may co-opt non-voting Assistant Officers to assist in its business”. DW has taken this to imply that anyone who has not been previously listed in 6.1, 6.2 and 6.4 as a Council Member is intended to be an “Assistant Officer” and therefore have no formal vote. There is no other means mentioned in the Constitution of appointing others to Council.

BM: The constitution is silent about the co-option by Council and its committees of persons to non-Assistant posts. If they are considered to be of such value, then why should they not have a vote? Council has always accepted such persons as having both the power of a vote and the right to propose and second proposals.

MD: It was always the intention of the Constitution to limit the number of people voting people at meetings.

BM: Is concerned that this sets a precedent for Standing Committees.

NW: The ultimate body, Council, is democratic but the sub-Committees should be able to run their own business.

AE: Feels very uneasy at the principle that a Chairman can, in effect, appoint a number of friends to a Committee and then affect the balance of power.

BM: They would be appointed by the Committee, rather than the Chairman, so the Committee ought to be alert to this possibility.

DW: We must be aware that although allowing others to vote gives them a voice, it also dilutes the voice of the Regions and Constituent Bodies in the Special Committees. DW does not feel this was the original intention of the Constitution.

- AE: It seems to be the feeling of the meeting that Section 2.2.2 is appropriate.
- DW: Section 2.2.3 has been derived from the precedent set in the Constitution that no one person may vote for more than one Group at an AGM. There is no mention in the Constitution of this being extended to Council Meetings though.
- BM: There may be situations where an individual may be holding down two Offices. It would then be appropriate to have more than one vote.
- EP: As both a Group Member representative and BCRC's representative, it may be that I need to vote in two different ways on an issue.
- DW: It is always preferable that Bodies send separate representatives to meetings, as it avoids this difficulty. Also, in the event that both the Bodies represented by one person agree on an issue, having two different people putting forward their case helps reinforce it.
- BM: Might be worth writing in the point that Constituent Bodies and Regional Councils should clearly identify their representatives to the Secretary.
- JP: Currently this is done by the Minutes or e-mail.
- DW: This is something the Secretary reviews annually, but it may be sensible to formalise it.

Sections 2.3.1-2.3.7 were accepted without discussion.

Section 2.3.8 Meeting Minutes

- DW: Feels he should add to the Minutes distribution list the following bullet point: "anyone listed in the attendance list for that meeting".
- BM: Should there be a procedure for deciding what should form an "Action" within the Minutes?
- DW: Feels this is difficult to put into words. DW will liaise with BM over this outside the meeting.

Section 2.3.9 Voting Procedures

- DW: Are we happy that there is no quorum necessary?
- JP: In the original NCA Constitution a quorum existed and on occasions this led to threats of people walking out of the meeting to prevent the Committee making decisions that they did not agree with.
- MD: The meeting dates are well advertised and agreed a year in advance, so groups should be able to be represented if they choose to be.

Section 5.9 Logo Use

- DW: Idris Williams has pointed out by e-mail that Shropshire Scouts Caving Team were given approval to use the logo by a Council Meeting in the past. DW has agreed with him that they will now use the Member Club logo.

Section 5.14 Representatives

- GJ: The CSCC Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report to the AGM says that approval of any document can only be agreed following approval by the members at a meeting. This would conflict with 5.14 as proposed.
- JP: There is no point having a Rep if they are not allowed to agree things.
- GM: Surely this is only the case in a split decision vote anyway.
- GJ: The CSCC Constitution does not contain reference to the position stated in the E&T Officer's report.

Action 80a: DW to write to CSCC asking for clarification.

Links with CHECC

- GM: The Training Committee do not normally give Grant Aid to Constituent Bodies, but GM would like Council to agree to CHECC receiving it before the Training Committee can approve their grant application.
- BM: Given the importance of the the University sector to caving, we should set the precedent that CHECC be allowed to access Training Grants.
- GJ: How important to each Uni is the feeling that they are a Uni Caving Club? Is there any mileage in exploring the option of having a Uni Caving Club to which everyone belongs, so that there is one club rather than a number as there are at present?
- MD: This would need careful consideration as there would undoubtedly be issues with individual Universities allowing only their students to be members of their club.
- DW: Has real concerns that, as an Organisation, we do not seem to be planning for the future. A considerable proportion of those running BCA, Constituent Bodies and the Regions are of the older generation and this is not sustainable into the future. It is important that where possible we all try to find interested younger people and involve them, even in a small way, in our work. That way they will gain useful experience for taking on the bigger roles in the future.
- CJ: DW is correct. We need to encourage useful people to take on roles within BCA.
- AE: Do we need to formally propose to accept reports from now on in view of having just agreed to Section 2.3.7 of

the Manual of Operations.

DW: Doesn't feel this is necessary, but we must understand that we are accepting any parts of an Officer's Report than have not been specifically discussed at the meeting.

The remainder of the Secretary's Report was accepted unanimously

8. Treasurer's Report (*written report previously circulated*)
deferred until after Item 13

9. Conservation & Access Officer's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

JP: The problem of Shale-oil extraction has been highlighted at the European Federation and for the first time there have been proposals in the UK in Morecombe Bay. There is a large limestone area to the North and North-East. Is this something we need to take a particular view on it?

AE: We can deal with this under the FSE Report later.

CG: Some cave art has been vandalised in West Wales. Has BCA done anything about it?

BW: As far as BW is aware, the local Council is intending to gate it.

GJ: Had they not gone public with it, there almost certainly would not have been a problem as the art was difficult to find.

AE: There is nothing wrong with gating as such, but cavers should have access at a controlled level.

BM: Presumably Cambrian is aware of this and discussing access.

The remainder of the Conservation & Access Officer's Report was accepted unanimously

10. Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report (*written report circulated*)

GJ: It is probably appropriate to add that the prototype anchors will be decommissioned and replaced over the next two years once a suitable replacement has been approved.

MM: Where are we with the IPTD because Cambrian haven't yet approved it? We had requested the inclusion of a capability statement before accepting it. This has not yet been done.

GJ: This has been written and inserted.

NW: We are finalising copyright, at which point the document will be published.

MM: It would be very convenient if this could be done by the Cambrian's meeting on 6th November, as there will not be another opportunity for Cambrian to agree it for a long time afterwards.

BM: When is it intended to issue the statement referred to in the written report?

NW: Hopefully this will be issued on Monday following agreement among the E&T Committee. Would like Council to agree now to publish this statement once E&T have approved it.

GJ: Would like to emphasise that the reason we are not continuing with the PECO anchor is the production batch, rather than that there is anything wrong with the pre-production, or prototype, batch.

BM: However, because there is a question over the production model that has been followed, we still cannot rule out that there may be a problem with the prototypes.

The remainder of the Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report was accepted unanimously

11. Training Officer's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

Mine Inspections

GM: When Dave Carlisle began to inspect mines for use by LCMLAs, we paid his insurance because he was doing so little of it. We now need Steve Pope onboard. This is because Dave Carlisle's original brief was to inspect for LCMLA use, so he is unwilling to inspect for CIC use. We need insurance for this and it would come through Jardine Lloyd Thompson. For this reason GM is requesting that Council agree to fund it. The cost of the insurance is about £250.

PI: Agrees that this is acceptable.

Database

CJ: What is your approach to the database? Who have you been talking to?

GM: Specialists. Given the cost of it, GM would expect it to go out to tender.

GJ: Does this include the migration of existing data?

GM: Yes. A specialist suggests it is about 70 hours work. This person has agreed to do it for a fixed price and refund anything under the 70 hours.

CG: Will happily do this for nothing if he can meet the requirements.

NW: Do you have a written specification for what you want?

GM: Not yet, but that is the intention.

NW: Then Council should probably reserve judgement until a specification is in place. Have we involved Mary in this? She has considerable relevant experience.

GM: Mary will be very closely involved.

BM: Can we ask for Executive to approve this?

The meeting agreed that this is appropriate.

Action 80b: NB to put together a written specification of the requirements for a new database and submit it to Executive for their approval.

Training Accounting

GJ: You imply that you were unaware of this surplus. What is the process for budgets in Training?

GM: Mary looks after the budget.

PI: BCA Money is held in several accounts, and money is transferred between them when felt necessary to ensure there is the right amount of money in each account. As far as PI is concerned, the Training Account is simply part of the overall BCA cash.

BM: This has always been the position.

GM: This is fine so long as there isn't the eternal gripe that Recreational Caving is supporting Professional Caving.

BM: Actually Training has generated quite a healthy surplus for caving over the years.

PI: Has looked back over the period from 2004-10. Initially there was significant grant aid attached to professional caver training, but over the whole period there is a £15.5k surplus with only one year when there was a loss.

GM: There is also the cost of Training Committee, which has historically been accounted for under the professional heading.

BP: There was a time when Training was viewed as a burden. This is wrong. As a club we are using professional people to train our trainers and this is paid for by BCA.

Training Officer Role

GM: Is resigning at this meeting. The Training Committee met 2 weeks ago and unanimously agreed to recommend that Nigel Ball be appointed as Acting Training Officer for the remainder of GM's term. Nigel has considerable experience of the Training Committee over the years and is currently the Chair of the CIC Panel.

Proposal: to accept GM's resignation and also accept Nigel Ball as Acting Training Officer.

Prop: SN Sec: MD *agreed unanimously*

GM: Intends to continue to attend the Yorkshire Dales National Park on BCA's behalf. GM is also happy to remain involved with the HSE over the future of AALS, as he has begun this process and it seems sensible that he sees it through.

DW: Mary Wilde would like to thank GM for his support and help during the time he has been her 'boss'. She says he helped so much during her initial introduction to the role of Training Administrator and she has really enjoyed working for him. She hopes to be able to offer help and support to whoever takes over.

AE: Would like to thank GM for the phenomenal amount of work that he has put in on behalf of BCA.

Training Documents for Publication

GM: Is concerned that documents produced by the Training Committee have taken a very long time to be published by BCA.

Proposal: to accept that the "Hydrology of Goyden Pot and Manchester Hole" document be published as a BCA document.

Prop: DW Sec: BM *agreed unanimously*

Weather & Flooding Document

BM: Has 3 concerns: P. 25 – seems rather a strong statement.

GM: Given the current issues and the fact that it is aimed at LCMLAs, GM disagrees.

DJu: This does seem to be a broad generalisation and, from memory, there are others within the document.

BM: On P. 40 it says that a laminated card has been issued free to cavers. Is this true?

GM: Yes.

BM: On P. 41 there is advice for navigating deep water. Feels that this is not necessarily applicable to all deep-water situations such as the Green Canal.

SN: There is nothing in the training of cavers that teaches the use of throw-lines, as suggested in the document.

GM: The ACI agreed the text at Training Committee. If Council will not support the publication, then GM will publish it privately.

GJ: There are two areas of contention. If these two are altered, then there will be no concerns and we can go ahead and publish it.

BM: These concerns were raised with the P&I Officer a while ago, but do not appear to have been acted upon.

Proposal: ***That those with specific concerns about the Weather & Flooding document raise them with Executive and GM within 2 weeks. GM and the Executive will then take a decision on these concerns and, therefore, subsequent publication.***

Prop: GJ Sec: DW *agreed unanimously*

Action 80c: Those people with specific concerns about the Weather & Flooding document should raise them with the Executive and GM within 2 weeks. GM and the Executive will then take a decision on these and, therefore, subsequent publication.

GM: What about the Long Churn document?

DW: Unfortunately this has not been circulated among Council Members because DW had not received GM's agreement following the proof-reading process.

GM: Has not received the e-mail in question.

DW: Sorry. *[Post-Meeting note: this was DW's fault. The e-mail was sent to an incorrect e-mail address.]*

The remainder of the Training Officer's Report was accepted unanimously.

12. Publications & Information Report

No report received.

a. Webmaster's Report *(Web Services written report previously circulated)*

b. Newsletter Editor's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

MC: Currently has quite a bit of information for the next newsletter, but is more than happy for more.

AE: Will send a few things.

c. Handbook Editor's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

The remainder of the Publications & Information Officer's Report was accepted unanimously.

13. Legal & Insurance Report

DJu: A lot of work has been put into the 3rd Edition of the Legal & Insurance booklet by a number of people. We are aiming for publication early in the New Year.

a. Insurance Manager's Report *(written report circulated)*

Combined Risks Policy

NW: Written report should be amended to show that we have 3 employees, including Katie Dent. It is important to note that road risks are not covered for the artificial cave; this has to be arranged through the towing vehicle. We need to do something about an asset register. EP has offered to assist NW with Insurance. After some discussion it is likely that going forward EP will deal with the Combined Risks policy and work relating to the common policy for club huts.

Public-Liability Policy:

NW: It was very useful to be able to get the views of the clubs. A clear majority were in favour of increasing our cover to £5 million. We could afford to continue with costs as we are, but this would be at a cost to our reserves.

AE: There seem to be some clubs that are heavily in favour of it and no clubs that are strongly against.

AE: If people are demanding it, then we have to follow along.

JP: There are landowners whose solicitors are demanding it.

NW: This appears to be happening across the country, rather than it being confined to a small number of areas, as NW had previously believed to be the case.

Proposal: ***to increase our Public-Liability insurance cover to £5million in 2012.***

Prop: NW Sec: BM *agreed unanimously*

The remainder of the Legal & Insurance Officer's Report was accepted unanimously

2. Treasurer's Report (postponed from Item 2)

PI: Is gradually coming to grips with what is going on. PI is open to suggestions for improvements in the way the Accounts are displayed for 2012, but his initial impression is that what is currently done works.

Expenses

GJ: How easy is it to find the expenses forms on the BCA website?

Action 81: DW to e-mail a link to the expenses forms on the BCA website to Council members.

PI: Will aim to pay expenses claims within 28 days in future.

GM: Some representatives may not always come by the shortest route, choosing instead to take a quicker one.

PI: Claims that have been approved by the relevant Officer, submitted by e-mail will be acceptable.

PI: For last year's Cliffhanger event BCA paid about £500 against a total cost of £1000. This year the claim is for the full cost of £380.29. PI is unsure of how he should be paying this this year.

JP: This is entirely up to Council.

PI: Suggests we pay the full amount.

Asset Register

PI: If anyone has any equipment paid for by BCA, PI needs to know about it.

GJ: DC did an asset audit 2 or 3 years ago.

NW: It is important to pass the total sum to EP for insurance purposes, or we may be underinsured.

MM: Is this just BCA equipment, or does it also include Regional Councils.

NW: Our insurance covers Regional equipment too. There is also a question mark over some things, such as Library assets.

MM: There are actually 2 separate things here: a list of BCA's assets and another list of those things covered by the insurance policy.

DJu: How recently was the Hidden Earth equipment reviewed?

NW: Several years ago.

GJ: The important value for insurance purposes is the replacement value.

JP: We need to look carefully at the Library.

NW: Yes. We need to be clear with the insurers about what we are insuring.

Action 82: Anyone who holds any BCA, BCRA, Hidden Earth or Regional Council equipment to send details, along with the replacement value to PI by 31st October. PI to liaise with DC over previous Asset Register.

Action 83: PI to produce an Asset Register and liaise with NW/EP over the total replacement value of our insured equipment.

PI: Work for the next few months includes the Tax Return due by the end of the year.

Phone & Broadband Packages

PI: PI's policy is outlined in his written report. His basic principle is that anyone who feels they can put forward an appropriate claim should have it paid - it shouldn't cost anyone to do work on behalf of BCA.

BM: The underlying principle is showing that it is a clearly-identifiable additional cost.

GJ: My internet is paid for as an employee.

NW: We may need to discuss this.

Budget

PI: A draft budget was distributed. PI wants to set a benchmark for the start of 2012 so that we can see where there might be surpluses in the short term. Hopes to then be able to make the process more forward looking, rather than historical. The 2011 column on the draft budget is largely blank because PI is unable to determine our position at present. The budget includes an additional £5k for insurance. However this may need to be written upwards in light of NW's report earlier.

When considering whether to increase our membership fees, we should bear in mind that the reserves are there, but changing the insurance is a fundamental change in membership benefits and maybe ought to be reflected in the cost of this membership. It is also likely that the subscription income is too low, as PI needs to confirm a few things with GJ. It is likely that we need to add about £5k to the figure shown.

GJ: Are we suggesting increasing club and group fees?

NW: The basic club membership fee does not include a separate amount for insurance.

CJ: Some clubs will have had their AGMs and will struggle to pass this onto their members.

EP: Is £1 enough? Should we increase it by more?

BM: It is concerning that we have made obscene surpluses over the years. We should have a properly planned budget that will allow us to justify a potential increase. For example, there is some considerable planned additional spending by

some Committees and this does not appear to be reflected in the figures given.

PI: Will be in a much better position to put together a confirmed budget in January.

BM: We have accrued £100k over the last 6 years.

MD: This is specifically designated as the Association's reserves and the cost of two insurance excesses.

NW: We could afford to leave an increase for one year.

BP: We have already circulated the questionnaire about an increase to £5m and clubs have asked for it.

AE: We seem to be unanimous about putting up fees. The question then is by how much.

CJ: The question that went to clubs was clearly whether a £1 rise was appropriate or not. Therefore, that should be our increase.

BM: Suggests we don't increase the Club Membership fee.

Proposal: *to increase membership subscription for all individual members except students by £1 with no increase to other categories of membership.*

Prop: NW Sec: PI *agreed with 1 vote against*

The remainder of the Treasurer's Report was accepted unanimously.

Other Reports

14. Youth & Development

No report received.

15. Membership Administrator's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

DCh: Has BCRA membership gone down?

GJ: Will be able to tell you in January.

David Gibson's Paper

GJ: The process that David developed 18 months ago has now been expanded for groups, whereas previously the process for all groups was completely manually. This will mean an extra stage in the processing of data for groups, but will bring several benefits.

NW: We are essentially already committed to a process Dave Gibson started several years ago. This grew from a need for us to understand what David does and what would happen if he is no longer with us in the future, or goes in a different direction to the one we wish him to. What David's document does not cover is the ownership of the software that he has written and designed. In the future it is possible that David may decide to charge us, or the database might not be made so freely available to us. Until now David has been very sensible about this, but it is incumbent upon us to know where we are. This means there needs to be a written specification for a system. David doesn't really address this issue, but explains the process he is proposing to implement. We are very grateful to David for the work that he does and GJ is very happy with the way David is proposing to take this. David had been asked to come up with suggestions for ways of making the admin process simpler. He makes some suggestions on the second page of his document. One of these is to avoid charging separate postage to overseas members because it overcomplicates the form. The second one is altering the funding of Speleology to make life easier for volunteers, which broadly NW feels is a good idea for a small cost. Suggests the issue of Speleology funding is delegated to Exec.

GJ: Uses the words "simplifies" and "less complicated". You haven't defined who is finding this complex.

NW: David Gibson. In order to allow an overseas member to join, we have to agree a postage charge. This creates a different category of membership and makes it more complex in the background. It will also make it easier for the overseas member him or herself, as the amount they need to pay will be clearer.

DW: This would mean we are absorbing the cost of overseas postage ourselves.

Proposal: *to accept David Gibson's proposal to simplify the membership system.*

Prop: NW Sec: BM *agreed unanimously*

Proposal: *to give responsibility for dealing with Speleology funding to the Executive.*

Prop: NW Sec: GJ *agreed unanimously*

Action 84: AE, PI and DW to consider David Gibson's proposals on the funding of Speleology.

Direct Debits

GJ: Will there be a process put in place to allow us to talk to the Direct Debit people?

NW: Yes.

BM: Have we thought about the effort involved in dealing with people whose bank accounts are no longer active?
NW: A greater problem is people renewing who didn't want to. There is likely to be a significant reduction in workload for the Hucklow office as a result of introducing Direct Debits.

Proposal: *that we accept Direct Debits in principle, but that the detail be left to the Executive.*

Prop: NW Sec: MD *agreed unanimously*

MMc: It would be very helpful as a RCC Secretary to have access to the database. At present we get updates from GJ about 4 times per year, but this means that at the AGM, MMc doesn't actually know who is a Cambrian member. This could potentially lead to the meeting being found to have been non-quorate when those present thought it was.

GJ: This can't be done at present with the technology we use.

BM: There are also Data Protection issues.

NW: Doesn't personally think there is any organisational impediment to this, but there may be technological issues.

AE: There are two aspects here, the technology and the legality. Both these can be looked at.

GJ: Sends the information when he feels it is appropriate. Can happily send the information at a specific point in time.

MM: Contact details of members also change on a fairly regular basis. We are supposed to be a one-stop shop, but members seem to have to inform BCA and each of the Regions individually about changes to contact details.

GJ: Is it acceptable for me to send a copy of the membership database to MM?

NW: Provided the recipient is putting in place the appropriate security issues on receipt and using the data appropriately, then this is fine.

NB: It is important to understand that any information sent needs to be updated when it is altered, or alternatively be deleted as soon as it has been used.

Proposal: *that Council agrees that as technology, regulation and security permit, the membership database be made available to RCC Officers.*

Prop: MM Sec: NW *agreed unanimously*

The remainder of the Membership Administrator's Report was accepted unanimously.

16. Radon Working Party Convenor's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

The Radon Working Party Convenor's Report was accepted unanimously.

17. Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

The Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report was accepted unanimously.

18. International Representative's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

AE: Largely driven by climate change, Cave Science is holding an increasingly important position in the world. This has to be good.

FSE Report (*written report previously circulated*)

Shale Gas Drilling

GC: This is quite a political area. We had an earthquake in Blackpool and there are real concerns about fracking. During the process gas is liberated from a shale band and this is then extracted for use. In other areas of the world this has resulted in gas escaping randomly in all sorts of other areas.

CJ: The question is whether this could affect caves in the future.

DJu: The Craven fault is a barrier between the shale and the main limestone area. This should protect us.

AE: We should be cautious here. The concerns may be coming from environmentalists rather than speleologists.

OC: Bridgend and Torfaen are noted as possible sites. Caving could be concerned.

Action 85: GC to liaise with Tony Waltham re: Shale-Gas Drilling

AE: Next year's FSE meeting is planned for the usual Hidden Earth weekend, so wonders if it would be possible to move the Hidden Earth date.

DJu: Very unhappy about moving the date for Hidden Earth.

AE: It is very difficult to timetable international events, and generally nations need to move their events to accommodate them.

GJ: There is no date yet set for Hidden Earth, so where's the problem?

CJ: How many UK cavers will go to the Euro event anyway?

AE: The Swiss event will be excellent. Furthermore, as AE will have to go to the Swiss event with his UIS hat on, the

BCA Chairman will not be at Hidden Earth, unless we can move it by a week.

GC: The 2013 Forum will be near Montpellier. The French would like an exhibition to be put on about our speleo history. Our application for the 2016 Forum is in, but we need to wait until January to know for sure if we have been successful.

EP: There are moves to form a European-wide Cave Rescue group, something that has been discussed informally for years. A draft Constitution was floated before the Rescue meeting in Croatia, and BCRC want some serious amendments made to this draft. One of the main difficulties is whether the group should be affiliated to the FSE in order to be involved. BCRC are already involved in discussions on this, but may need BCA's support at a later date.

GC: Didn't know about the meeting in Croatia, but has read the minutes. At the Marbella meeting a proposal was made for the Rescue Group to become an FSE Commission, which is nothing more than a working group. There is no danger at the moment of it becoming an affiliation, as to GC's knowledge there is no constitutional way for it to happen.

The remainder of the International Representatives' Reports were accepted unanimously.

19. Media-Liaison Officer's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

CJ: Only twice has CJ ever had a phone call from the press about accidents. One was a general enquiry about Cave Rescue, when CJ pointed them in the direction of the BCRC Chairman. Generally the media only come to us for general comments. Maybe something should be put in place if Chris is unavailable.

Action 86: CJ to investigate appropriate ways of backing up the media-liaison role in his absence and bring them back to the next meeting.

The remainder of the Media-Liaison Officer's Report was accepted unanimously.

20. British Caving Library Report *(written report previously circulated)*

JP: In fact we made £39 more money from the "lucky dip" than outlined in the written report. Thanks should go to GC for donating some publications.

CJ: Would like published in reports to Council some actual figures for the number of queries handled by the Library, so we can get a good idea of how much we are helping people in exchange for our £10k per year.

NW: Would be helpful if the Library liaise with PI about how much money is needed in the future.

Action 87: JP and DCh to liaise with PI about how much money might be needed for the Library in the future.

21. Any Other Business

CHECC

GJ: CNCC wanted to make sure that people understand that CNCC can only issue permits to Member Clubs. As there are lots of universities that do not have a caving club, the comment about CHECC members is incorrect. The majority of CHECC member clubs are BCA members.

EP: The BCRC Conference will be in the Dales from 12-14th October 2012.

22. Date, Time & Place of next meeting

The next Council Meeting will be held at 10:30am on Saturday, 7th January 2011 at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch. It will be chaired by Mick Day in AE's absence.

The meeting closed at 16:30

Action Log – October 2011

No.	Action by ...	Details of Action
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6	PI	Update Bank Mandates.
36	DW	To put together a Manual of Operations
54	NW & DJu	To liaise with SUI with a view to helping them streamline their insurance situation.

June 2011 AGM

74	DW, AE, PI, DC, NW and LW	Liaise over setting up a group to look at BCA's IT Services.
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October 2011

79	CJ	Create "BCA Approved Provider" logo for use by BCA T/As, then pass to MW for distribution.
80a	DW	Write to CSCC asking for clarification about
80b		
80c	All	Those people with specific concerns about the Weather & Flooding document should raise them with the Executive and GM within 2 weeks. GM and the Executive will then take a decision on these and, therefore, subsequent publication.
81	DW	To e-mail a link to the expenses forms on the BCA website to Council members.
82	All	Anyone who holds any BCA, BCRA, Hidden Earth or Regional Council equipment to send details, along with the replacement value to PI by 31 st October. PI to liaise with DC over previous Asset Register.
83	PI	To produce an Asset Register and liaise with NW/EP over the total replacement value of our insured equipment.
84	AE, PI and DW	To consider David Gibson's proposals on the funding of Speleology.
85	GC	To liaise with Tony Waltham re: Shale-Gas drilling
86	CJ	To investigate appropriate ways of backing up the media-liaison role in his absence and bring them back to the next meeting.
87	JP & DCh	To liaise with PI about how much money might be needed for the Library in the future.



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Council Meeting, 15th October 2011

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Item 6: Chairman's Report

We have just had, what I believe was the best Hidden Earth ever at Monmouth on 24th/25th September. I have been going to the British National Caving Conferences for 43 years and to me, this was the best. Full marks to Les Williams and his team.

The Reports on British Expeditions at Hidden Earth show that there is a lot of activity going on, with records being broken by British teams below and above water. The Science morning also worked very well, with lots of complimentary remarks.

I am now looking forward to the BCRA Science meetings coming up next year. Look on the website for details.

Since our last meeting and AGM on 11th June, I have attended a number of regional meetings and met a number of other council members. Damian is working on our Manual of Operations and the first piece is for consideration at this meeting. Keep up the good work.

On that note, I should like to conclude by thanking Damian and all the rest of Council for their hard work. There is a lot going on with various activities including, training and equipment, not to mention insurance and membership.

Thank you everybody.

Andy Eavis, October 2011

Item 7: Secretary's Report

1) Manual of Operations: Apart from my general Executive responsibilities, this has been my main area of work since the AGM in June. The document "Manual of Operations Draft" (see Appendices) contains some of this, which I would like Council to discuss and consider approving. This will then form the basis of further sections which will follow at subsequent meetings. It goes without saying that we should not approve these without proper consideration, as they will form the blueprint for the way Council operates into the future.

Following this it is my intention to deal with the Executive, General Meetings and Standing Orders for Standing Committees and Working Groups at the January meeting. This will then allow the Standing Committees and Working Group to begin work on detailing anything specific to them.

Assuming we are able to conclude our discussions on the Discipline Policy at this meeting, I would like any Committee or Working Group that has a current such policy to review it in light of the agreed BCA one. In an ideal world we would all have the same one, but I am happy to be persuaded there is a case for further detail in some areas. I think this may need to be the case with Training, for example. It goes without saying that any such Policy will need to fit with BCA's generic one and be approved by the relevant Committee to which it relates. It is probably also appropriate that Council rubber stamps the final version. Obviously this process will take some time, but it would be very helpful if Chairmen were to make a start as soon as possible with a view to their Committee agreeing it in time for them to be included with the June Council meeting reports.

2) Help for Standing Committee Chairmen: One of the things I have been aware of for some time is how difficult it must be for Standing Committee chairmen, particularly new ones, to know how to navigate the intricacies of BCA. There have been a number of instances over the time I have been involved in Council when a lack of proper consultation early on, has resulted in considerable frustration at a later date once a lot of effort has already been put into something. This is not good for anyone and ends up creating a lot of extra work for people, as well as sometimes giving rise to hostility. In an effort to help with this, I intend to turn several key parts of the Manual of Operations into "How to" documents. Examples will be "How to go about publishing a document", "How to decide what to report to Council and what can be left out", "How to deal with a complaint made against you" and "How to request additional funding". I'd be grateful for any other ideas of other potentially useful topics for similar treatment.

3) Links with CHECC: I have for some time been concerned at the apparent lack of links between CHECC, one of our Constituent Bodies, and BCA. Clearly, if that is CHECC's choice, then that is fine. However a chat with their current Chairman made clear to me that this was not the case, but that the nature of their organisation is such that there is an annual change "at the top" and it is then difficult to maintain links. We subsequently had a very useful meeting, and have discussed some ways of making this less problematic in the future. I also took the opportunity to ask CHECC to encourage the few remaining member clubs that are not BCA members to join up. Another useful outcome of the meeting was that I was invited to attend the CHECC Forum at the end of November to talk to the various Uni Club Presidents. This will give us a chance to listen to their needs and also help boost BCA's profile among them. I think Andy is also hoping to attend. It is my intention to make this an annual date in my diary.

4) BCA Photo Montage: Council Members will have seen an e-mail I sent out in June, backed up by a post on the UkCaving Forum, asking for photos of BCA's work. It struck me that this is something we ought to collect anyway for advertising purposes, but I also felt it would be nice to have a standard set of adverts that could be inserted into publications when there's a space, or equally printed as large posters to be placed around at Hidden Earth, for example. I now have photos of: taping, entrance capping, fixed ladders, the artificial cave, bolting, bolt testing, the Library, rope testing and the odd expedition photo. I have been promised some training ones by Boyd Potts. For a fair reflection of everything that we do, I would really like to have a photo of a regional C&A officer smiling and shaking the hands of a farmer, some more training photos, a photo of cavers repairing paths, walls or stiles, a photo of a Council meeting as well as some of the Standing Committees. I hope to be able to find someone young and enthusiastic to volunteer to put together the final adverts, and will be doing this shortly.

Thinking more generally, though, we probably should be putting in more of a concerted effort in general to keep amassing new photos of our work. Maybe this could be brought up at Standing Committee & Regional meetings with requests that people remember to photograph some of the work that is going on. I am more than happy to act as a repository for these. I also wonder if it might be appropriate to make receipt of a Caver Training, or GPF grant in the future conditional on supplying us with a photo we can use.

Damian Weare, October 2011

Item 8: Treasurer's Report

The first couple of months have been ones of familiarisation and getting a feel for the financial flows and reporting of the Association. This started slowly (Year End in the day job) but my understanding of the processes is now picking up. My initial view is that the systems in place are fundamentally sound but I would like to develop the management information output a little; i.e. be able to answer the "Where are we up to?" question at any point in time, which is at present not as straightforward as it might be.

To that end, and as a matter of normal practice, I will be putting together a draft Budget for circulation at Council. This will be "draft" as there are several significant items which are still to be resolved. A final Budget will then be presented at the January meeting and it will be my intention to use that benchmark against which to answer the above question as we go into and through 2012.

The first main task arising from the AGM and June Council was the transfer of bank mandates. This did take longer than expected, but has now been completed for the main HSBC accounts. Online access was achieved with a little less delay. Transfer of the Nat West, Standard Life and Paypal account mandates has not yet been completed, but this will be done before the next Council meeting.

A further task discussed as part of the handover was to review online access to the various HSBC accounts. This I have now done and can report that the authorised users and their access options appear to be appropriate to requirements at this stage. At the Council meeting I will be submitting forms to officially transfer the Primary User access from Cookie to myself and following that transfer I will update the access options to reflect the current mandates and structure.

One thing I have noticed fairly quickly is that expenses claims arrive on occasion in various random ways and formats. To date I have not made an issue of this given that the handover has meant some delays in getting payments organised, but going forward I am going to insist that such claims are submitted on the standard forms, along with supporting receipts where required. This need not be a big paper chase (electronic versions exist on the website), but it is important that we have good evidential backup of claims for governance and audit purposes.

On the subject of payments, as noted above there have been a few delays. Going forward, it is my intention that any properly submitted and appropriately authorised claims should be paid within 30 days (with a small rider about "cash flow permitting").

The other action point outstanding to me from June was to look at the potential reimbursement of phone/broadband packages. I have indeed looked at this area and have obviously found that there is an absolute morass of tariffs, information and packages. Identifying a "one size fits all" policy is therefore virtually impossible. The matter needs further discussion, but in my opinion any such charges should be reimbursed only if they are :-

- a) Clearly identifiable (e.g. itemised call cost), or
- b) Demonstrably incremental due to BCA workload (e.g. a higher cost package)

In the case of (b), the test would be that if an officer's BCA workload ceased, what would be the cost saving if a lower cost package were taken?

Finally, looking ahead, I believe that it could be beneficial to investigate the possibility of implementing a low cost accounting software package to replace the existing spreadsheet-based setup. The advantage of this would principally be that the package could be hosted more securely (possibly via Web Services) and with greater resilience when compared to being reliant on laptops. An added benefit would be that that source data could be entered remotely and the current "islands" of accounting could be at least partly bridged.

Paul Ibberson, October 2011

Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report

Progress is continuing in relation to an access agreement with the Forestry Commission. It looks auspicious and in Wales will probably include Outdoor Education Centres too. We are as yet unsure what remedial action is to be taken at Victoria Cave but understand that something has been proposed but not yet acted on.

Elsie Little, October 2011

Item 10: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report

The most recent E+T meeting was held only last weekend and I have been travelling for work for pretty much the whole of this week and so there simply has not been time to prepare anything sooner. Matters were not assisted by a network systems failure at BCA HQ earlier this evening!

Council has several important matters to discuss and should not be spending excessive amounts of time on E+T matters at this meeting. I do not think that there are any matters currently open which require a decision from Council but there a few matters to report.

We had what I consider to be a successful E+T meeting last weekend. This included getting agreement on the following statement by all sides:

As a result of the process of arbitration, CSCC have agreed to the IPTD including a requirement for SRT competence, on the basis that the document will become copyright of BCA and subject to future revision as agreed by the E+T Committee.

Many other matters were discussed at the meeting and the draft minutes should be available in the next week. There is one particular matter which I need to draw to Council's attention, which relates to the choice of a replacement for the DMM Eco Anchor. In brief, we have identified problems with the Chinese sourced anchor which we had intended to use and as a result have decided to abandon further development of this solution. Unfortunately, a small number of prototype anchors have already been placed in the Yorkshire Dales and Scotland. Following extensive discussion of the technical aspects, the Committee took the view that while the anchors are adequately safe in the short term, we have a reduced confidence in their longer term safety than is the case for the DMM product and so the Committee have decided that these anchors should be decommissioned and replaced over the next two years. Details of the location of the anchors and of the problems will be placed on the CNCC website and I was supposed to have prepared a statement which could be agreed by e-mail within E+T before being released to Council at this meeting. I regret that this has proved impossible in the time available.

I propose that Council should agree that the continued responsibility for management of the anchor programme, including publicising the problems related to the Chinese anchors, should be delegated to the E+T Committee.

Nick Williams, October 2011

a) Rope Test Officer's Report

Nothing to report.

Bob Mehew, October 2011

Item 11: Training Officer's Report

The last three months have been busy as usual, the following issues are relevant to Council.

- It is now almost certain that AALS will cease to exist after 2012; HSE began this process following Lord Young's report. A letter was sent to all NGBs in October 2010 this I received in June 2011, I actioned this with a meeting at HSE Bootle in July. The HSE consultation document was published in June giving just three months for responses - this time frame closed on 22/09/11. On 1st August NGB's were asked to nominate two representatives to sit on a working party. They intended that the two would cover all NGBs. Following lengthy conversations with John Cousins MLTUK, it was decided that he would represent land-based activities and Amanda Van Stanton RYA will cover water-based activities.
- Long Churn has had another serious incident which could have produced a worse tragedy than Mossdale. In the past three years there have now been four flooding incidents involving LCMLA leaders. Following consultation with the ALO's, the Chairman and the Secretary I suspended the two LCMLA level twos for a period of two months pending them attending a flood-awareness course and producing flood-relevant risk assessments. I would expect Council to support the TO in instances such as this where difficult decisions have to be made.
- I tasked the NCP two weeks ago to produce a Code of Practice for Technical Advisers. This is extremely important and pressing with the demise of AALS. At present the variations in what Technical Advisers provide are incredibly diverse and there is a real need for a base-line code which I would hope BCA will expect CIC's to adhere to.
- NCP will also be looking at Site-Specific Assessment once they have established the above Code of Practice.
- At the AGM I raised the issue of surplus Training generated capital and where it had gone to. Following the meeting I did a little research finding that in the last eight years some £16,000.00 has been moved from training into BCA's general

account. This situation somewhat annoys me when at almost every Council meeting I am told by one person or another that recreational caving will not support the provision of a highly regarded training scheme. Take the training schemes away from BCA and you will have a far weaker, less appreciated organisation. I still do not believe that separating the two is the way forward, but please let's have an organisation that embraces all the differing factions of caving rather than a 'them and us' situation.

- I have two requests for Council both are pressing: Firstly Steve Pope a mining engineer is to undertake some inspections based in North Wales. At present he will only be doing a couple as Dave Carlisle is still active. We need SP to be insured and I would like us to adopt the same system as we had for DC a few years ago in that BCA picks up the insurance cost until he takes over full-time from DC. Secondly Mary is working at present with three different databases. None are compatible with each other meaning she has to enter data three times. The databases are no longer fit for purpose. I have made enquires and established that a new system incorporating the other three could be built for us between £2,500-£3,000. I ask that Council approves this expenditure.
- I feel that it is important that when NCP goes to the hard work of producing quality documents, as they have, then they should be adopted by Council quickly rather than eighteen months later. Most of our publications are safety based and should be out in the public domain quickly.
- There is a great deal more work to be done in future and the following twelve months will be a difficult time for the TO. I firmly believe you cannot treat the TO as the same as any other officer of Council. The work load is great and certainly out of the remit of a volunteer. I have decided that I have had enough without a clear standard operation procedure to follow and walking a knife edge between different parties without the clear support of Council. I am therefore resigning my post with immediate effect. I have canvassed someone to take over the role until elections can be held at the next AGM. This arrangement obviously requires Councils agreement. I sincerely hope that Council shows the next TO a great deal of support.
- I will obviously offer my support to the incoming TO if he/she asks for said help.

As Council does not see the minutes of the NCP I felt I should copy you in to the following :

Vote Of Thanks From The NCP

At the NCP meeting on 3/10/2011 Graham Mollard explained that he would be stepping down from the post of Training Officer at the next Council Meeting on 15th October. Tom Peacock responded by thanking Graham and outlining his achievement over the last 6 years. Tom said that the role of the Training Officer was a difficult one and had often been carried out without the backing of clear BCA processes and procedures. He had had to deal with several serious incidents such as that at Porth yr Ogof. Tom went on to list the following as Graham's greatest achievements: -

1. Creation of the Weather and Flooding document, Safety Card, and the Manchester/Goyden Document.
2. Creation of the Deep Water document
3. Modernisation of the schemes, which involved trying to get many people singing from same song sheet.
4. Development of a partnership between the BCA and the Military resulting in scheme parity and improvement regarding the relationship between us. This involved some considerable personal time on Graham's part.
5. Establishment of a higher profile for the training schemes within the BCA and with other NGB's.
6. Standardisation and the scheme and links with the Irish scheme.
7. Radical changing to the revalidation system, involving active participation 5 years rather than simply a rubber stamp.
8. Better links with HSE and AALS.
9. Finally raising the profile of the Training Officer Role.

Tom proposed a vote of thanks, which was passed unanimously.

Graham Mollard, October 2011

Item 12: Publication & Information Officer's Report

No report received.

Les Williams, October 2011

a) Webmaster's Report

No report received.

Les Williams, October 2011

Web Services continues to operate well with no service outages that I'm aware of. Since my last report we host two new domains and websites.

The phpCOIN software that I use to process the invoicing and payments can now be regarded as bedded in and reliable. As such I'm moving the task of processing payments and banking to Great Hucklow. Customers will now post their cheques directly to Great Hucklow, rather than me, where Katie Dent will post them onto the phpCOIN system and then bank them along with her other banking. I'll continue to remain in charge of raising invoices and all the other aspects of Web Services.

b) Newsletter Editor's Report

The next newsletter (Issue 15) is currently being compiled. If anyone has material for this newsletter it will gratefully received. I hope to issue the newsletter by early November.

As I announced at the AGM, I am looking to hand over the editorship this year. If anyone is interested in taking over or knows of a willing volunteer, please make Les or myself aware.

Mike Clayton, October 2011

c) Handbook Editor's Report

The 2011-12 Handbook was posted out to all DIMs, CIM+, Club and Associate members in July. Thanks are due once again to Jerry Wooldridge for his help with the cover design and, of course, to the advertisers.

This year I made the decision to reduce the number of Handbooks that were printed from 650 to 620, since I wasn't aware that that we'd ever run out in the past and I had also decided to stop sending copies to caving shops for sale (as a survey of them suggested that they never sold any anyway). Needless to say that we ran out almost immediately and I have had to get a further 100 printed, based on Glenn's estimate of the number of new members likely before the end of the year. I think, but haven't actually bothered to investigate, that this means we have more DIM, CIM+ and Club members than in previous years. I am sure Glenn's report will tell us.

As in previous versions, the online version is kept fairly up-to-date with a record of amendments for those with paper copies.

Damian Weare, October 2011

Item 13: Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

No report received.

David Judson, October 2011

Item 13a: Insurance Manager's Report

Several matters to report with regard to insurance for this meeting.

Firstly, we have just renewed the Combined Risks business policy - this provides employer's liability cover for our two employees (Mary Wilde and Glenn Jones) as well as insurance for their equipment and for other declared equipment held by regional councils, BCRA and the Hidden Earth team. The Entre Prises artificial cave and its trailer are also covered. We have been able to get what I believe to be competitive terms for renewal from our brokers, Anderson Ashcroft.

Secondly, I have also had a positive initial response to my enquiry about whether we can offer a BCA co-ordinated scheme for property insurance for clubs with huts. I will be taking this forward in the coming months.

Thirdly, and most significantly for the meeting on 15 October, Council will recall that in June I raised the issue of whether we should move to a 5m limit of indemnity for the policy (from the current figure of £2m). A survey of the club membership was undertaken by e-mail and I am pleased to report that about 40 emails were received. They are summarised in the appendices. There is a clear majority in favour of the move to £5m cover.

I asked Anderson Ashcroft for an indication of the premium increase. Linda Ashcroft's reply was "Zurich have said that they would want a premium circa £10k to increase Public Liability to £5M. My initial thoughts are that this is high and, should you wish to take the matter further at this point in time I would be looking to persuade them to reconsider downwards". I would observe that the last time we asked this question we were given a firm quote of £8k for the cost of the increased limit.

It seems pretty clear that we should move to the increased limit of indemnity. Questions which Council need to consider are:

1. Do we do this for 2012, or aim to do it for 2013?
2. Do we aim to recover the full extra cost from members in the year in which we increase the cover, or do we use reserves to stage the premium increase, or do we increase the contribution for 2012 but actually increase the indemnity from 2013 only.

My personal recommendation is that we should get on with the increase as soon as possible, and increase the individual contribution by £1.00 for both caving and non caving members for 2012. At the end of 2012 we then review whether we need a further increase in the members' contributions to ensure we are covering our costs.

Nick Williams, October 2011

Item 14: Youth & Development Officer's Report

Nothing to report.

DCA Stand at Cliffhanger 2011

Cliffhanger is now the premier open-air outdoor activity event in Great Britain with an attendance of over 20,000 this year. Derbyshire Caving Association ran a stand at Cliffhanger 2011 on 2nd and 3rd July throughout the 2 days of the event, setting up on the Friday and removing the last of the gear on Monday. Altogether some 20 cavers from DCA clubs were involved, some from Friday to Monday, others for 2 days, a day, half a day or even just Friday evening to help us set up. We aimed to have at least 3 people helping on the ladder climb, 4 on the artificial cave and one in the stand tent all weekend and we organised breaks and swap-overs to try to avoid anyone having to work for too long without a break.

The Stand Tent: Inside the DCA stand tent were displays and information leaflets about caving, local club contacts etc. A number of adults called in to ask about caving, even though they were not interested in taking part in the activities, and were given leaflets and advice on caving, clubs to contact, equipment required etc.

Ladder Climbing: The 30ft. ladder was rigged from an overhanging tree branch. A tackle bag full of sweets was attached to the top rung for the climbers to take one when they reached their goal. The climbers were lifelined by volunteers and were fitted out with a helmet and climbing harness. Around 300 people climbed the ladder during the 2 days of Cliffhanger, mostly children. The child pictured in the white helmet on the ladder was only 4 years old and she wasn't the youngest. We also had one chap with white hair and a beard who made it to the top; week or so later he was taken on a caving trip by some of the volunteers from the weekend.



The DCA Artificial Speleological System (aka ASS): The cave, built for DCA by Dennis Jump, is made up of 4 box sections with an outlet tube and can be dismantled to be "flat-packed" for transport, giving a total "passage" length of about 40 feet. It is painted black inside with pictures of stalactites and bats, has a carpeted floor (to avoid splinters in knees), a moveable "squeeze", climbs up and down and an exit through a tube of black fabric. When it was in use the whole structure was covered by a tarpaulin to hide what was actually there, so only the entrance (covered by a black fabric curtain) and the exit tube could be seen by users. Exiting the "cave" we heard a comment from one excited child, "Hey it's huge inside! How did they get all that in there?" Each "caver" was fitted out with a helmet and light by DCA volunteers before entry and the "cave" was in constant use throughout the 2 days. We estimate that more than a thousand children went through during the weekend, some returning several times.



Costs: The total cost to DCA of putting on the weekend was £380, of which £141 was spent on additional fittings and equipment for the "cave": helmets (small sized cycle helmets were cheap and serviceable), torches, tarpaulin, etc. (The total cost of the "cave" and all its fittings, over the two years 2010 and 2011, came to £727. Transport to the site was free in 2011, courtesy of the National Trust who now store it for us at a site in Edale.) The travel costs of volunteers in 2011 came to £200; some of them came a considerable distance to help for the weekend. The remaining expenditure was on consumables: batteries for torches, sweets for the ladder climb etc. We are grateful to the local caving clubs and outdoor centres who lent us the ladder, rigging, lifelines, harnesses and climbing helmets.

We are especially grateful to the volunteers who put in so much time and effort into making the event a success for caving.

Jenny Potts, October 2011

Item 15: Membership Administrator's Report

Membership to October 6th 2011:

- DIMs caving: 415 (DIMs plus BCRA: 191, CIM Plus: 12)
- DIMs non caving: 52
- BCRA Honorary: 7
- CIMs (caving): 4244 (non caving): 1005
- Clubs: 171
- Associates: 10
- Access: 5

It is anticipated that this meeting will set the 2012 membership rates. The 2012 renewal process will begin on 1st December when I start to email the individual group renewal packs. David Gibson will also be posting the "ultra-simple" renewal letters to DIMs in early December.

David has also been building (for the 2012 renewal process) an on-line process for "groups", which means that (just like the process for "paper" DIMs) I will need to process all groups via the on-line membership process. Although slightly more onerous to process, the benefits will include the capability to generate mailing lists and statistics at a single "click", and also more accurate accounting for clubs as they pay for additional members throughout the year.

Other work "in then pipe line for 2012" includes simplifying on-line forms (including groups) with the ability to allow members to call up and modify their existing data and the simplification of paper forms.

Glenn Jones, October 2011

Membership Database Report

Following a discussion with Andy Eavis and Paul Ibberson earlier in the Summer, I picked up an action which I have had on the back burner for several years, namely attempting to get a clearer understanding from David Gibson about the direction in which he sees that the work he has been doing on our membership database system will take us. Taking this forward is my responsibility in my role as the Line Manager of our membership services and administration functions.

For those who are not aware, David has been involved for a long time now in BCA and BCRA membership administration, in two distinct roles: firstly he has taken responsibility, as a volunteer, for creating an online system which allows members to join and pay their membership renewals. Secondly, he has taken responsibility for dealing with all the difficult and awkward cases relating to the nuances of the membership system which result from the complexity of our two organisations, but particularly BCRA.

It should be placed on record that I have always viewed the latter role as an extension of the Membership Administrator's role and so David has always had the option to claim payment at the same rate as Glenn for the time he spends on this. In fact, he has rarely, if ever, made any such claims. He has never claimed any payment for the time he has spent working on the database/online aspects of the system since he (rightly in my view) sees these as an extension of his volunteer role.

David's report is shown in the Appendices. It contains some issues which we need to discuss within Council, although ultimately Council may be better deciding to delegate responsibility for finalising decisions on these matters to the Executive rather than attempting to resolve these fairly complex and technical matters in an open discussion. Nevertheless, it is clearly right that Council should be aware of the activities and of the decisions which need to be made.

David has put an immense amount of work into the membership system over a sustained period (long before he took on being Secretary of BCRA) and I would strongly encourage Council to support the proposals he makes in his report, while simultaneously recognising that the timescale he proposes will provide us with a point in the near future where we can take stock of where we currently are, and make some longer term decisions about where to take this next.

Nick Williams, October 2011

Item 16: Radon Working Party Convenor's Report

Regrettably, the Radon booklet still has not gone through the whole process of external assessment. Whilst I believe that we have gone through all of the hoops, and Bob Mehew and myself have been happy with the prepared text, the HSE have been the main hold-up. Bob gave the draft of the booklet to the HSE on 26th May. Their first reaction was that it was probably not in their remit but they have no technical concerns with the document. However, they are now undertaking an internal process to provide permission to quote on the front page of the document that the booklet has been produced "following consultation with HSE". This was the situation with the first booklet which did go through their hands. Once it was in their process it simply grinds its way and a response is expected after the 17th October. Assuming that they agree I hope that other than an outstanding double check of the references and other proofing, the booklet will then be ready for issue.

Bob has also had discussions with Dave Judson over the incorporation of some of the text into the BCRA Legal & Insurance book. This has resulted in an agreement that a reduced form of the text shall be included. Regrettably due to pressure of other matters, the text has yet to be provided.

There have been no enquiries regarding radon in caves since the last meeting.

Clark Friend, October 2011

Item 17: Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report

I have established contact with co-ordinators in all the regions except Ireland. I'll continue to enquire if they want to be involved. The co-ordinators are all keen to see the National Speleological Sites List go ahead. The project is designed to effectively be an index into the local registries that are now appearing on the web.

I'm currently developing the software needed for that project. My aim is to keep it very simple so that will be available soon.

David Cooke, October 2011

Item 18: International Representative's Report

In my capacity as UIS President I have attended a number of international meetings recently.

In early September I was at an Arctic Karst Meeting in Penega, Russia which was also attended by several member of the International Union of Speleology Bureau. Although the Conference was scientific, we did manage to get some informal UIS business done.

Last week I was at the first meeting of the International Council for Science that UIS have attended. This was in Rome, Italy. There were scientific representatives from most countries of the World present and most of the eminent Scientific Institutions

were also represented. Of the 350 delegates all fees were paid by the United Nations and the opening ceremony was attended by the President of Italy and his entourage of guards and paparazzi!

For Scientific caving our presence at this meeting in my opinion is a step in the right direction.

From there I went to Sardinia as guest of the Sardinian Mine Caves Group where I visited a number of hydrothermal caves - a great experience.

In the New Year there will be a UIS Bureau meeting which is scheduled for Iran but maybe moved to Switzerland in the Autumn. The main International event on the horizon however is the UIS Congress in Bruno, July 2013. Much UIS effort is going towards this.

Andy Eavis, October 2011

Item 18a: FSE Report

Since the last report to council there have been two meetings of the FSE, one in Barcelona on 2nd July & the later one in Marbella 27th September. The General Assembly Meeting (GAM) was also held in Marbella on 28th September.

- **Membership of FSE:** In 2010 new members include Denmark, Finland, Slovakia, Austria and Macedonia. In 2009 Greece paid fees and these were sometimes received from the Federation and sometimes from their Society. Who retains control in Greece still remains a mystery. In 2011 all countries excluding Denmark & Macedonia have paid their fees. This totals 28 members. Serbia and Slovakia were late in payment. Denmark and Macedonia will pay at the end of August. Turkey and Montenegro are considering membership and Ukraine have decided to join in principle but have further questions about the purpose of the FSE in terms of promoting scientific work and expeditions. Russia has not formed a federation yet and Armenia has expressed an interest in joining. The council of Europe still comprises 48 countries including UN countries.
- **Women in Speleology:** A number of countries are looking at the possibility of a commission that would work on enhancing the role of women in speleology.
- **European Cave Protection Commission:** The ECPC continues to be very active with Ioana Meleg (Romania) chairing proceedings. Elsie Little is being kept abreast of developments.
- **International Caving Expedition (ICE) data base:** The FSE and UIS are working together to move this forward. A meeting is to be convened in Verona on 28th October.
- **Shale gas drilling:** More information is needed to clarify how this is affecting Karst areas in Europe
- **Marbella 2011:** This was a triumph and young people participating in SRT competitions. GAM took place at conference. A comment was made about the competing caving conferences taking place on this date i.e. Hidden Earth, Marbella, Austria and Lebanon. This must be avoided in future.
- Establishing partnership between FSE and Balkan speleological union (AZ). This was approved by the GAM in Marbella.
- Organisation of Euro Speleo forum 2014-16
 - ES forum 2012 to take place in eastern Switzerland
 - ES forum 2013 Montpellier (13th anniversary of FFS)
 - ES forum 2013, Czech republic (Czechs not responded yet)
 - ES forum 2014/15, call to go out
 - European Congress 2016, so far UK only applicant. In December result known.

Ged Campion, October 2011

Item 19: Media-Liaison Officer's Report

- Provided the logo for the Secretary at his request after Council was provided with a set to choose from for the last meeting.
- Had a missed call from journalist about Long Churns rescue but I was on holiday so didn't ring them back. Should we consider a backup plan when I'm out of the country or unavailable?
- Fielded calls from journalists about the Welsh Mining accident.
- Been approached by company trying to promote the 'cave of forgotten dreams' film who wanted to borrow the artificial cave – pointed them towards Katie.
- A few other short phone calls from members of the public /cavers.
- Registered the BCA with the BBC THINGS TO DO, ACTIVITY MAKER under the Country file section. This gives us the opportunity to create events/activities and have them listed on the BBC website. The idea if that we could advertise clubs 'Try Caving' sessions online for them. It is a facility that the Y&D officer might want to take advantage of?



Chris Jewell, October 2011

Item 20: British Caving Library Report

Cataloguing: The last of the BCRA Library material from Matlock was transported to the new British Caving Library premises at Glutton Bridge by the end of May and since then we have concentrated on completely re-cataloguing all existing material as well as cataloguing new material as it arrives and sending everything on to Martin Laverty for inclusion in the on-line catalogue, which can be reached via the Library website.

All books are now catalogued up to date and details have been sent to Martin. Our Librarian, Mary Wilde, is dealing with all foreign periodicals and is well on the way to completing the backlog on these and I am working my way slowly through the UK periodicals. Expedition reports are being taken out and filed in a separate sequence under the country they refer to, which should make things easier for enquirers.

Duplicates: Space is at a premium and as we work our way through we are finding large amounts of duplicate material and this is being disposed of in the most useful way we can. We ensure that we keep copies of all different editions of a book or report, and also copies which have been annotated, signed or have items stuck into them. We set aside items of value and would suggest that, in due course, we invite bids for these from the caving world. We are contacting UK clubs to see if we can help them to fill gaps in their own libraries and are now promoting our "Lucky Dip" boxes at Hidden Earth where cavers can help themselves in return for a donation. We made £125 by this means last year and just over £130 this year; the proceeds will go towards buying more books.

Exchange Journals: We are now at last, after much checking of addresses, re-starting the exchange scheme with foreign caving organisations whose exchanges have lapsed to ensure that BCL has the best collection possible of such material for UK cavers to refer to. The criteria we use are:

- a. Journals should contain material on cave exploration, including cave surveys.
- b. Journals should contain cave science material.
- c. Cave rigging and trip reports should be given.
- d. The journal should have a track record of publication over a period of years.
- e. There should have been some communication with the journal in recent years.

The exchange scheme is effectively funded by BCRA as it is normally for Caves & Karst Science with sometimes Speleology in addition and, in some cases, the exchange is with Speleology only.

Promoting the Library: The Librarian runs a Facebook page, which now has over 200 followers, and each month she advertises new entries to the Library and also gives an update, such as "quote of the week". John Gardner, who runs our Library website, assists in putting the updates on the website and also adds items to the Audio Archive. We are considering advertising duplicates for sale via the Facebook page and the website. Our presence at Hidden Earth raises the profile of the Library and discussions "over the tabletop" with participants open new avenues for co-operation with club libraries. Once we have got a little further with sorting things out we intend to hold an "open day" to raise yet more interest.

There is a steady but slow increase in enquiries received, mostly by email, which are answered by sending photocopies or scans. We are now hosting more visitors who come along to do their own searches and we are able to provide access to a PC, wi-fi, copying and scanning facilities as well as to all the Library material and abstracts publications (e.g. Speleological Abstracts) and offer a friendly welcome in pleasant surroundings. Many of our visitors donate material when they come and we are also being given valuable material by older cavers who no longer want to keep it at home.

Jenny Potts, October 2011

Item 21: Any Other Business

a) CNCC Permits for Constituent Bodies

CNCC would like to emphasise that under the terms of its access agreements with various landowners, CNCC can only issue permits to BCA members clubs. "Member Clubs" do not include Constituent Bodies. We feel we need to make this statement to avoid the misunderstanding and sometimes fraught email exchanges experienced in recent years with regards to (but not uniquely) requests for Casterton Fell permits.

SPECIFICS: Some clubs/organisations are abusing the 'guest' status of membership. In at least one occurrence, there were more 'guests', than members on the trip. Can 'guest' status be applied to a non-BCA member club caving with a BCA member club? Or, is 'guest' status only applicable to individuals; and if so, is there a percentage of guests to members ratio?

CNCC is not actually sure whether a non-BCA club caving as a guest of a BCA member club infringes its access agreements with the landowners of the Leck and Whelprigg Estates. Further, it is a condition of the access agreement with the Whelprigg Estate that novice cavers are not permitted into the Easegill system and that the system is not used for training cavers in caving techniques (other than the techniques used by experienced cavers e.g. photography, surveying, and conservation)

These issues need addressing because the CNCC Access Officer and CNCC Committee have concerns over the issue of permits for events, where the number of BCA member clubs is small compared to the clubs attending the event. It is also a concern where the organisations and the clubs concerned do not see the benefits of BCA membership, or think that BCA membership is too onerous.

Glenn Jones, October 2011

Appendices:

Manual of Operations Draft

for consideration at BCA Council 15/10/11



It is intended that Council discuss, amend and subsequently approve each part of the complete draft Manual of Operations over the next year. These are the selected extracts to be considered on 15th October 2011. The original version can be found at www.tinyurl.com/bcamoo.

BCA Manual of Operations – DRAFT (for discussion on 15/10/11)

2. BCA Council

BCA Council is governed by Section 6 of the BCA Constitution.

For more information on BCA Council, see the following:

2.1 Annual Appointments

2.1.1 The following posts are appointed annually by Council. This is usually done in the Council Meeting following the AGM.

- Media-Liaison Officer
- UIS Representative
- FSE Representative
- British Caving Library Representative

2.1.2 Additionally Council ratifies the following appointments annually, based on a recommendation from the Committee shown. This is usually done in the Council Meeting following the AGM. These appointments are:

- Child-Protection Officer (L&I Committee)
- Handbook Editor (P&I Committee)
- Newsletter Editor (P&I Committee)
- Publications Sales (P&I Committee)
- Rope-Test Officer (E&T Committee)
- Webmaster (P&I Committee)
- Web Services Officer (P&I Committee)

2.1.3 Finally Council must confirm the continued operation of Working Groups at the Council Meeting following the AGM. This is typically done by appointing a convener of each Working Group. See “Working Groups” for more information.

2.2 Council Members

2.2.1 Council is made up of the following voting Officers and Representatives:

Executive (3): Chairman (Andy Eavis), Treasurer (Paul Ibberson), Secretary (Damian Weare)

Standing-Committee Chairmen(5): Conservation & Access Officer (Elsie Little), Equipment & Techniques Officer (Nick Williams), Legal & Insurance Officer (David Judson), Publications & Information Officer (Les Williams), Training Officer (Graham Mollard)

Regional Council Reps (5): Cambrian CC (Mike McCombe), CNCC (Glenn Jones), CSCC (Mark Williams), DCA (Jenny Potts) and DCUC (David Jean).

Constituent Body Reps (8): ACI (Stephan Natynczuk), ASCT (Idris Williams), BCRA (Dave Checkley), BCRC (Emma Porter), CDG (David Brock), CHECC (James Collings), NAMHO (Steve Holding), WPCST (Alan Finch)

Club Representatives (4): Boyd Potts, Owen Clark, Emma Porter & Bernie Woodley

Individual Member Representatives (4): Mick Day, David Cooke, Chris Jewell, Faye Litherland

2.2.2 In addition the following members are invited to meetings and encouraged to take part in all discussions, but do not hold a formal vote:

Working Party Convenors (3): Cave Registry (David Cooke), Radon (Clark Friend), Youth & Development (James Collings)

Appointed Others (15): President (Mick Day), Rope-Test Officer (Bob Mehew), Newsletter Editor (Mike Clayton), Handbook Editor (Damian Weare), Webmaster (Les Williams), Web Services Officer (David Cooke), Insurance Manager (Nick Williams), Library Rep (Dave Checkley), UIS Rep (Andy Eavis), FSE Rep (Ged Champion), Media-Liaison Officer (Chris Jewell), Child-Protection Officer (David Judson), Publication Sales (Jenny Potts), Membership Administrator (Glenn Jones), Training Administrator (Mary Wilde)

2.2.3 It should be noted that, although an individual is free to represent more than one Group, no one individual is entitled to more than one vote.

2.3 Meeting Procedures

2.3.1 Council meets four times a year, typically in January, March, June and October with the dates for the year set by the June meeting.

Full meetings are held in January, March and October. The June meeting is traditionally a short one that follows the AGM (after a short break).

This schedule has evolved around the need to meet Constitutional Requirements for the AGM, as well as avoiding "difficult" times of the year, such as August (holidays), December (Christmas) and September (Hidden Earth).

2.3.2 Timeline

1 month before: Secretary to request Reports and Agenda items by e-mail.

2 weeks before: Council Members to submit additional Agenda Items to Secretary, including details of any potentially large items to be raised under the Standing Items (for details see "Written Reports" section below). Secretary to distribute the Agenda and Draft Minutes of Last Meeting to Council Members by e-mail.

1 week before: Council Members to submit Written Reports to Secretary. Secretary to collate and then distribute Reports to Council Members by e-mail.

1 month after: Secretary to publish Draft Minutes (for details see "Meeting Minutes" section below).

2.3.3 Venue

Meetings are generally held at the Baptist Church Hall, Alvechuch. Details can be found [here](#). As an alternative the Red Lion pub next door has a meeting room available upstairs. Contact details can be found [here](#).

2.3.4 Agenda Items

A sample Agenda with standing items can be found [here](#). The Agenda is typically published two weeks prior to the meeting and Council Members should, where possible, inform the Secretary in advance this if they wish to raise something that is not a standing item. This will then usually be added as an item under AOB before distribution. It should be noted, though, that although this does not prevent matters being raised at the meeting itself, the meeting is more likely to defer judgement until a future meeting if the various Representatives have not had time to refer back to their organisations. See the role of the representatives for more information.

The June meeting is shorter and typically makes Council's annual appointments, and sets the meeting dates for the year ahead. If necessary, it will also formally record a resolution needed to change bank mandates. A sample Agenda for the June meeting can be found here. Urgent items that cannot reasonably be held off until October can also be dealt with. As above, ideally these will have been notified two weeks in advance of the meeting.

2.3.5 Written Reports

To ensure the efficient running of the meeting, and most importantly, to allow representatives to be fully prepared for the decisions they may be required to make, Officers and appointees are expected to provide written reports 7 days prior to the meeting. These are collated and distributed by the Secretary.

Reports should typically include:

- an update on progress since the last report;
- proposals for Council's consideration, including the necessary background and any recommendations of the Committee;

as well as anything that may:

- constitute a material change to the Terms of Reference and business of the committee;
- involve other Association Committees or members;
- have legal implications for the Association;
- have financial implications for the Association beyond those already agreed;
- involve the Association in a change to established policies or require the Association to agree a new policy or procedure.

Should any of these latter points be included, then it is expected that papers shall be sent to the Secretary a minimum of two weeks before the date of the meeting to allow representatives sufficient time for consultation. In this situation the attendance of the Convenor or other committee member would generally be required at the National Council Meeting.

Should this process not be followed, then the Chairman may well decide to postpone discussion of the item until the following meeting.

Committees will be formally advised of decisions reached or policies instituted or amended via the Minutes of the relevant National Council Meeting.

2.3.6 Applications for Club Membership:

The Membership Administrator is empowered to provisionally accept new Club Members provided they meet our criteria for a properly constituted Club. The Club will then become a Member once we have received their membership fee, but this is provisional pending acceptance by the next Council Meeting (or AGM, whichever comes first). At each meeting the Membership Administrator should make Council (or the AGM) aware of clubs that have been provisionally accepted since the previous meeting so that any concerns can be raised. Council (or the AGM) should then vote on whether or not to accept the Club as a full BCA Member Club.

2.3.7 Procedure for Accepting Reports:

Once the meeting has finished discussing the contents of an Officer's Report, and is happy with everything reported that has not discussed, the Chairman should ask if everyone present is happy to accept the remaining items of the report? Anyone with anything further to add should raise it at that point. If not, then the Chairman will move to the next Report. In the interests of a smooth meeting, it is not necessary to

formally propose and second each acceptance. It is important to note that in accepting a Report, Council is indicating its agreement with everything mentioned that has not been separately discussed.

2.3.8 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of meetings should include:

- details of those present
- apologies for absence
- any matters arising from previous minutes
- reports to Council from Executive, Officers and appointees (which should be attached to the minutes)
- details of discussions on specific issues, points raised and decisions taken including, where appropriate, records of votes for and votes against.
- a means of indicating actions to be taken outside of the meeting, such as an "Action Log".

Minutes and other papers should be distributed as soon as practical after meetings. In the interests of effective communication, it is considered good practice to distribute Draft Minutes, before they are accepted by the next meeting, rather than waiting for fully Approved Minutes. Before publication the full Draft Minutes should be agreed by each of the Executive. However, in the event that this is not possible within one month of the meeting, the Secretary should ask another Council Member, or Members, to check them before publishing.

On publishing Draft Minutes the Secretary should send them to:

- all members of National Council.
- any other person or organisation the Secretary or another Council Member feels may have an interest. Currently this includes: the Secretaries of the Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies, plus the FODCCAG Secretary.

A copy of all Draft Minutes should also be added to the relevant section of the BCA website, ensuring that any Draft Minutes are clearly marked as such, both in the document itself and on the website.

Only in the event of significant changes being made at the following Meeting, should approved Minutes also be distributed as above, although they should always be updated on the BCA Website.

2.3.9 Voting Procedures

Voting is by simple majority of those present and eligible to vote with no minimum number necessary for the meeting to be quorate. The Chairman shall hold the casting vote. The "Council Members" page gives a list of those eligible to vote. Although an individual is free to represent more than one Group, nobody is entitled to more than one vote.

5.2 Complaints Process

Stage 1 (Informal Complaint)

Initially an informal complaint should be made to an appropriate person in BCA, such as the relevant Officer or, if the complainant is unwilling, or unable to approach that person, then with one of BCA Executive. The emphasis at this stage is on dealing with the complaint as efficiently and informally as possible.

Stage 2 (Formal Written Complaint)

If the complaint cannot be dealt with satisfactorily at Stage 1, then a formal complaint should be made in writing to the appropriate person in BCA. This will normally be acknowledged in writing within 14 days and

the recipient should immediately inform one or more of BCA Executive of the complaint and their intended course of action. In most situations it is anticipated that the complainant will receive a formal written response within 3 weeks of initially making the complaint.

Stage 3 (BCA Council)

Should the complainant be unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, then they should write to the Secretary explaining their complaint. The Secretary will normally acknowledge receipt within 14 days, and include an invitation to attend the next Council Meeting, where the complaint will be discussed. Prior to the Meeting the Secretary should acquire sufficient detail about the nature of the complaint, so that the matter can be dealt with whether or not the complainant is present. The Secretary will then normally write within 14 days of the Council Meeting to formally advise of Council's decision.

Stage 4 (Appeal to BCA AGM)

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3, then they have the right to appeal to the Annual General Meeting. To do this they should write to the Secretary explaining their complaint. The Secretary will normally acknowledge receipt within 14 days, and will include an invitation to attend the Annual General Meeting. The complaint will normally be included on the Agenda immediately following Matters Arising from the previous Minutes. Prior to the Meeting the Secretary should acquire sufficient detail about the nature of the complaint, so that the matter can be dealt with whether or not the complainant is present. The Secretary will then normally write within 14 days of the AGM to formally advise of the AGM's decision.

5.6 Disciplinary Process

5.6.1 General Principles:

- No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter in question has been fully investigated.
- At every stage individuals will have the opportunity to state their case, either themselves or through a representative.
- There is always a right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty.

5.6.2 Process

Once it has become clear that an individual or group may have acted against BCA's interests, the following process should generally be followed:

- One or more of BCA Executive will be informed.
- The individual or group will be written to at their last known address advising them of the complaint made against them, and requesting that they state their case. A period of 30 days shall usually be given for this to occur.
- The matter will be considered by either the appropriate Standing Committee, National Council, or Executive. In general more serious matters will be dealt with by National Council, following if appropriate guidance from one or more Standing Committees. Less serious matters may be dealt with by Executive, in conjunction with an Officer if appropriate.
- The individual or group will be written to again outlining the outcome of the process and giving the opportunity for appeal.
- An appeal against a warning should be dealt with by the next National Council Meeting. An appeal against a suspension or expulsion should be dealt with by the next Annual General Meeting.

5.6.3 Sanctions

Every disciplinary case should be considered individually. Available sanctions include:

- a verbal warning.
- a written warning.
- suspension of membership (and/or certificates or awards) for a fixed period.
- expulsion from BCA (and/or removal of certificates or awards).

5.6.4 Notes

- In the case of suspension of membership, this will also include the temporary removal of membership benefits, such as insurance.
- In the case of a club being suspended or expelled, any Club Individual Members from that club will be written to and offered either: a pro-rata refund; the option of transferring their membership to a DIM (on payment of the appropriate fee); or the chance to switch their main club affiliation to another member club. In the event of a successful appeal, BCA will subsequently refund any additional membership fees paid by an individual as a result of the above.

5.9 Logo Use

Sub-Section 11.5 of the Constitution bans use of the BCA logo without the permission of Council.

The following organisations have been given this permission:

- Sports Financial Services Ltd.
- Jardine Lloyd Thompson
- Entre-Prises Ltd.
- all Constituent Bodies
- all Regional Councils

A "Member-Club" Logo was also created in June 2010 for use by all paid-up member clubs. This is available here.

5.14 Representatives

Representatives are vital to the smooth running of BCA. They help ensure the interests of all Constituent Bodies, Regional Councils and Committees are accommodated. However the role can be very demanding, particularly when immediate spur-of-the-moment decisions are requested at meetings. Therefore the following principles should apply to Representatives:

- A Representative is empowered to agree matters on behalf of the Body they represent, unless instructed specifically to the contrary by that Body.
- However a Representative can also say that they do not feel able to express the view of the Body they represent. In this case, if at all possible they should be given chance to refer the matter back to their Body for clarification.
- In view of the delays resulting from a referral back, it is sensible to avoid the need for this by effective communication in advance. Therefore prior warning of potential areas of discussion and decisions that will need to be made should be given if at all possible. Written Reports and the distribution of draft documents and Minutes all help in this regard. The onus here is on the Officer, Committee, Constituent Body or Regional Council requesting the decision.

Responses re limit of indemnity

	In favour	Against	Comments
DCA	1		No problem with a £1 increase to pay for the extra cover
Cornwall Mine Explorers		1	£2m in line with cover for most self employed persons
Devon Mining Club	1		BBC Requires £5m for filming activities
Kings School Macclesfield	1		Increase in contribution seems a small amount
Kent Underground Research Group	1		Well worth £1 or £2 increase in contribution.
Great Orme Exploration Soc	1		Actually need £5m but have been getting away with £2m because nobody checks
Trident Caving Group		1	Increased indemnity increases likelihood of a claim
Burton Venture Trust	1		We have to carry £10 M for some activities!
Derbyshire Caving Club	1		Need £5m for lease from NT
Goodluck Mine Preservation Club	1		Even £5m isn't what it used to be!
Bracknell District Caving		1	Relaxed about it if the increase in contribution is only £1
Wirksworth Mines Research Group	1		Well worth £1 or £2 increase in contribution.
Hades Caving Club		1	We would not want fees to rise to pay for the higher level of cover
DCUC	1		Access has been denied to a number of sites due to insufficient cover
Wimps and Y anchors			Increase of £1 per member would be insignificant
Rubber Duck CC			No objection to paying the extra premium
YSS		1	No strong arguments either way
Mines of Lakeland Exploration Society		1	You would need to do something pretty horrendous to justify a five million pound claim
Axbridge Caving Group	1		No objections raised at raising the subs by £1 for an indemnity of £5m
Bradford Pothole Club	1		What increase in premium would be required to increase cover to £10m?
Gagendor Caving Club	1		We have no problem paying an extra £1/head to increase the cover
Elysiium Underground Group	1		It might be a complete waste of money but it's always better to be protected that not
MNRC	1		we are happy for the indemnity limit to be raised
Masson Caving Club	1		Would support the increase in the liability level and resulting extra charge to members
Craven Pothole Club	1		A limit of £10 million would be more appropriate
Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club	1		We think it's inevitable and would be in keeping with modern amounts for injury
Lanner and District Mining Club			No strong views
Underground Overground Club			No strong views
South Wales Caving Club		1	Happy to keep the limit of indemnity at £2m
Shepton Mallet Caving Club		1	Do not feel there is any reason to raise the level of cover beyond £2M
Devon Speleological Society		1	Only increase if landowners demand it
TOTALS	18	9	

BCA/BCRA Membership System: report for BCA Council meeting, 15/10/11

Background

My intention, since 2005 when I got involved with the membership system, was to smooth out the problems in administering BCRA's own membership and subscriber records. There are particular difficulties that BCRA's requirements bring to the system. Each time a new person has got involved in handling the membership records these requirements have not been properly stated by BCRA, which has led to long-term problems – e.g. the chaos with BCRA's journal exchanges and the reduction in the number of BCRA's overseas subscribers.

Present situation

Our system of recording payments and mailing details has to deal with a number of categories of what we colloquially call 'members', although they are not all 'constitutional' members. For example, they include the non-member subscribers to our periodicals, the members of BCRA's journal exchange programme and the recipients of 'correspondent' copies.

It was long ago **agreed** by BCRA and BCA that we **must** have only one master mailing list to cover **all** of the above, because anything else would (as had been proved in the past) lead to confusion and a poor level of service. This means that our 'membership' system has to cope with a large gamut of record types. At the moment, Glenn Jones handles the 'constitutional members' and I, on behalf of BCRA, handle all the other categories.

My main intention, throughout this work, has been to bring it to the point where the two systems can be merged back into a single 'unified' system, and one where the processes are fully documented and can be operated by anyone in possession of the 'instruction manual'. From BCRA's point of view this is an important step because, at the moment, the knowledge of BCRA's processes (subscription, exchanges etc) is still not documented, nor widely understood.

I think there has been some concern that a large amount of knowledge is ending up in the hands of a very few people and this is why I consider the documentation to be important. Also, it is my intention to take steps to ensure that the web software and the PC-based mail-merge programs (e.g. for membership renewal letters and subscriber statements) are properly archived for BCA. Once I have completed this exercise, I consider any further involvement by myself to be 'optional'.

Current plan of work

There are several tasks that are on the agenda for completing by the end of the year, including...

- **Online forms to be extended to cover Groups**
Although most Groups will not make use of this themselves, BCA staff will process a Group's postal application via this online route, as they do for DIMs, which will result in a uniform set of data in a single database, accessible to staff online.
- **Simplification of forms**
There are several ways in which the online and the paper forms can be simplified. One would be to remove the overseas postage surcharge. The reasoning behind this is given in Appendix 1.
- **Addition of processes to online forms**
The online forms will allow some additional processes such as upgrading from CIM to DIM, updating address data, and so on.
- **Consideration of payment methods**
There are issues surrounding the use of PayPal that I hope to address. Also, it would be good to implement a Direct Debit system before the end of the year. See notes in the Appendix 2.
- **Merging with Publication Sales**
Observing that the system for dealing with Publication Sales is remarkably similar to the membership process, it makes sense – in my opinion – to combine BCRA's developing online shop with the membership facility. It uses similar processes, similar software and is handled by the same staff. I have already 'tested' aspects of this with Katie and Mary. By integrating it 'formally' we end up with a robust facility that simplifies the tasks of all BCA's and BCRA's volunteers and makes it easy to train new staff, because there is only one system that covers members, subscribers, exchanges and sales.

Future involvement

I have been concerned about the possible 'out-sourcing' of our membership system because of the lack of documentation and the lack of a specification of our requirements. Implementing solely a 'BCA Membership System' would leave BCRA out in the cold, with its complicated system of subscribers and journal exchanges. Hence my desire to get the system to a point where, properly documented, it can be handed back to BCA. Having reached that point, at the end of this year, my involvement may no longer be necessary. However, I am certainly willing to stay involved – not only to assist Glenn, but to discuss how I, and others within BCA, could develop the system further. Or, if BCA wished, they could investigate a third-party involvement, knowing that a complete description of our requirements was available.

David Gibson (with minor edits by Nick Williams)

14 October 2011

Appendix 1: Proposals for simplifying membership system

There are a number of ways the system can be simplified but I would like to concentrate on just two here.

1) Overseas postage

There are something like 465 DIMs of which only 19 (4%) live at overseas addresses. The majority of these are BCRA members receiving both C&KS and Speleology, of which 7 live outside Europe. To give you an idea of the insurance income, of the 19 overseas DIMs, 11 are non-cavers. Taking all that into account, I would like to suggest that it would be a simplification to remove the surcharge for overseas postage. The simplification arises because the forms would no longer need to have a section explaining all the postage options. (At the least, I intend to remove initial mention of postage from the online form, which will only mention it when it detects an overseas customer).

2) Funding of Speleology

This proposed simplification does not affect customers, but it is a simplification for BCA and BCRA staff. At present, BCA pays all the costs for Speleology and expects to receive any income. But accounting for this income and expenditure and correctly allocating it to BCA or BCRA is a considerable effort on the part of Katie, Glenn, Mary and myself (and, I suppose, the two treasurers) and is anything but 'transparent'.

I would like to suggest that a single organisation takes responsibility for handling *all* aspects of periodical printing and mailing. It makes sense for this to be BCRA, because BCRA already has a publication/sales operation set up for C&KS, which I presume BCA would not want to take on.

In practice it would work as follows. BCA would continue to pay the editor (the payment is 'transparent') but, instead of paying Pagefast for the printing, and haphazardly* paying staff's incidental expenses (postage etc.), and receiving some amount of sales income in return, BCA would pay BCRA a grant to produce Speleology. If this grant were calculated on the basis of "printing cost, plus haphazard expenses less the haphazard sales income" then there would be no difference to the finances of either organisation but it would be a lot less work for everyone involved in calculating the finances. It would also be clear to BCA's members exactly what it was funding.

* 'Haphazard' because Speleology and C&KS are frequently dealt with in the same publications sales orders.

Appendix 2: Implementing Direct Debits

There are a number of agencies that process Direct Debits in a most similar manner to the way agencies such as Paypal, NoChex, WorldPay process credit card transactions. As an example, one I have studied does not charge for transactions 'as such' but has, instead, a set-up fee of £150 together with a charge to configure each bank account and a charge per transaction file processed. The procedure would be that Glenn would send them a spreadsheet which listed all the transactions we wanted to do at any one time (i.e. 300-odd at the start of each year), and there is **one** small charge for processing that file (£10).

The most significant cost (in this example I have studied) is setting up each customer's account, which – if I have understood correctly is £2.50 per customer. Clearly that is a significant amount, but we only pay it **once** per **customer**. So, each **new** member / subscriber will cost us £2.50 to process as a one-off charge.

As far as the customer is concerned, there are two ways that he signs up to the process. Either he completes a paper form and posts it to us, for our staff to manually enter online on the agency's web site; or the customer goes online himself and completes the agency's online form. Personally, I see no reason why we should not limit this facility to online users only because it encourages them to enter their own data onto our online forms, which saves us a task.

If further investigation indicates that Direct Debits are too expensive then there are other options. The Paypal equivalent of a standing order (called a subscription reminder) is free. The Paypal equivalent of a Direct Debit costs a fee. However, there is a potential problem with Paypal, which is why some people do not like to use the company. I think that if we wish to do a literal 'direct debit' of a customer's account we should not be using PayPal.

How do we proceed now?

There is plenty of time for us to set up a Direct Debit facility so that it is in place in time for the membership renewals at the end of this year.

However, there are undoubtedly issues of 'authorisation' of the account, which mean that a BCA officer (e.g. the treasurer) would be the most appropriate person to do this. Prior to this, someone needs to obtain comparative quotations from several of the agencies that provide this service.

I need to know how BCA Council wishes to proceed with this.