



Minutes of BCA AGM, Saturday 5th April 2008, Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch

Present:

Mick Day (MD)	Chairman/DIM
Simon Froude (SF)	Secretary
Dave Cooke (DC)	Treasurer/DIM
Elsie Little (EL)	Conservation & Access Officer/DIM
Andy Pryke (AP)	Equipment Officer
Bob Mehew (BM)	Rope Testing Officer/DIM
Les Williams (LW)	Publs & Info Officer/Wessex Caving Club rep/CIM
David Judson (DJu)	Legal & Insurance Officer/DIM
Chris Jewell (CJ)	Youth & Development Officer/CIM
Glenn Jones (GJ)	Membership Administrator / CNCC Rep
Mike Clayton (MC)	Newsletter Editor/CIM
Damian Weare (DW)	Handbook Editor/DIM
Charles Milton (CM)	Individual Member Rep/DIM
Emma Porter (EP)	Individual Member Rep/BCRC Rep/DIM (Recorder)
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Rep, Orpheus Caving Club/DIM
Jenny Potts (JP)	DCA Rep/DIM
Joe Duxbury (JD)	Gloucester Speleological Society Rep
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	Association of Caving Instructors Rep
Idris Williams (IW)	Club Rep, Shropshire Scouts Caving Team
David Jean (DJe)	Devon & Cornwall Underground Council Rep
Alan Finch (AF)	William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust Rep
Steve King (SK)	CSCC Rep/Individual Member Rep
Bernie Woodley (BW)	Club Rep, SWCC/Individual Member
Arthur Champion (AC)	Craven Pothole Club Rep
Mike McCombe (MM)	Cambrian Caving Council Rep
Owen Clarke (OC)	Club Rep, Cwmbran Caving Club

The meeting commenced at 10:40 am.

1. Chairman's Welcome – Introductions and procedures

MD welcomed members to this AGM. MD advised that SF, Secretary had not been in contact and he was not aware of any official nominations for posts. MD thanked JP for drafting and circulating the agenda at short notice.

EP agreed to act as Recorder for the AGM.

2. Apologies for Absence

Clark Friend (CF)	Radon Working Party Convenor
Pete Allwright (PA)	BCRC Secretary
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO
Graham Mollard (GM)	Training Officer

3. Applications for Membership

MD was not aware if SF, Secretary had received any nominations in his absence and no one else was aware of any, so the following assumptions were made:

3.1 Group Members: None at this time.

3.2 Direct Individual Members: None at this time.

BP pointed out that in the minutes of the 2007 AGM it had been agreed that this item was unnecessary and should be dropped from the agenda in the future. JP had forgotten and apologised for this error in the agenda.

4. Minutes of the 2007 AGM (*Previously circulated and on website*)

4.1 Proposal that they be taken as read: MD confirmed that draft versions were circulated to Council in May/June 2007 and had received no suggestions of any amends.

That they be taken as read.

Prop: BW, Sec: DW. ***Agreed unanimously.***

4.2 Proposal that they be confirmed as a true record:

That they be confirmed as a true record.

Prop: BW, Sec: DW. ***Agreed unanimously.***

5. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 2007 AGM

None.

Officers' Annual Reports

6. Chairman's Report (*Written report tabled*)

6.1 Bingo Lottery – CJ commented that he had not seen the shows and queried the statement in the Chairman's Report as to why we "may shrink from such an objective". MD advised that each programme is one hour in length with a sequence of films from different governing bodies. It has been very successful in Sweden but not sure how the money is awarded. BM asked what is the potential gain, concerned about the relationship between receiving money and the hoops that we will have to jump through. Would need to find interested parties, if there are some, but usually ends up with the same people doing the work. MD is concerned about the constraints; BCA is not committed at the moment but is on the list of governing bodies that are interested. In terms of timescales, the whole set up has taken far longer than envisaged and it covers not only outdoor pursuits but also dance, music with hundreds of participants. There is ample time to make a decision as to whether to be involved and we will have more of an indication when CCPR announces the funds paid to other bodies.

That the Chairman's report be accepted.

Prop: DC, Sec: JP. ***Agreed unanimously.***

7. Secretary's Report

SF gave a verbal report later in the meeting than originally scheduled on the agenda.

7.1 SF apologised to Council that he had not been able to give the post the time it needed and would be happy if someone wished to take over the post. SF advised that there was not a lot to report for the last year but there is the need to formalise procedures as these are not written down.

7.2 AC was asked on behalf of Craven PC to register dissatisfaction at the lack of a published and circulated agenda.

7.3 CJ asked if the Secretary's workload can be reduced. MD advised that costs for administrative assistance had been approved. CJ asked if rather than pay are there others that can do these roles? SF advised that the post should not be that time consuming, MD added that after a year in a post it does get easier.

That the Secretary's report be accepted.

Prop: CJ, Sec: DW. ***Agreed unanimously.***

8. Treasurer's Report (*Written report tabled*)

DC gave a verbal report.

8.1 Bank accounts – The bank accounts are now all internet accounts with the relevant signatories in place. Money can be moved easier, so employees are paid quicker by BACS and the accounts can earn a respectable amount of interest.

8.2 Paypal account – Dave Gibson is setting a system up for the BCA website to accept on-line payments.

8.3 Accounts – A draft set of full accounts was made available. DC advised that there was no balance sheet. A discussion about the accounts then followed:

8.3.1 DC advised that the layout of the accounts has changed. Subscriptions were previously shown under the heading of Administration and Insurance was separate but they are now under one heading. The heading of Administration has been renamed as Association.

8.3.2 Training - The previous heading of Training, has now been split into two new headings, that of professional training to now be known as Training Services and amateur training to be known as Cover Training. IW queried last year's expenditure, had the impression from GM that he believed Training Services was more than breaking even. JP pointed out that time lags in accounts meant that some expenditure was incurred in different years but that over a number of years it would make more sense. A large chunk of grant has been lost which means that accounts show a surplus last year but deficit this year, DC added that the function of accounts is to even out. LW noted that there had been an increase of £2,000 in travel, but BM advised that travel expenses had been included elsewhere previously. Over £1500 had been spent on publications, of this £800 on log book folders, previously under LCMLA Training. DC had expected a far worse deficit than £2,000 and BM stated that the work undertaken by the Training Committee is acknowledged, deficit far smaller than expected. IW thought historically money was not being spent on training, BM disagreed as the Training income has gone up but no report is produced to show who is coming into caving and whether fees charged have put them off. No report has been provided by the Training Officer (see note under Training Officer's Report), MD advised one is needed. Action on MD/DC to extract a set of numbers relating to the LCMLA for 2007 and how they reflect on previous years as to whether the scheme is on course to break even.

8.3.3 Subscriptions - The 2007 accounts show that income was approximately £10,000 more than in 2006, which shows that the membership is increasing. GJ confirmed this, he took the role of Membership Administrator on in September 2006 when there was no definite list of numbers, but has increased from 7000 to 9300, although he noted that some memberships are one-offs. BM added that in 2004 the DIM membership was approximately 50, in 2007 was 351 and in essence the figures are showing an increase year on year.

8.3.4 - Insurance – premium has dropped previously, but this year has gone up a little.

8.3.5 - Employment – Expenses gone up considerably, shows how much work there is. GJ reported that he is working 150 hours per month but is only contracted to do 75 hours per month. DC pointed out that it should be noted that during 2006, BCA did not employ anyone for 6 months of the year so not truly representative of costs for that year.

8.3.6 - Association (previously Administration) – Earned over £1,000 interest, but this is now going down.

8.3.7 – Meetings & Conferences – this has been split into two. GJ reported that there was a positive article in Descent about the Vercors and the tickets are sale or return, although he thinks we will sell all of them.

8.3.8 - Web Services – costs are being covered. SK queried why the costs have gone up so much. DC reported that the figure looks high but balancing loss in previous year and will break even.

8.3.9 - Regional Caving Council Expenditure – Regional Councils should apply for more money, CSCC had not put a claim in during 2007, although CNCC had put a claim in but were overpaid on a previous grant, GJ confirmed that they had been paid twice in 2005 and had agreed the amount would be off-set.

8.3.10 - Expedition account – DJ queried £5,000 being shown in 2006. DC advised that the amount was actually £2,500 for each year for 2006 and 2007, half of it was paid early and should have been split with 2007. It was noted that at the meeting held on 5 January 2008 it was agreed that Council would grant the Ghar Parau Foundation £5,000 for 2008. GJ asked if DC was copied on the banking spreadsheet, agreed to send copy to DC each month.

8.3.11 - International - MD reported that UK Sport altered the available grants and the way the money is given, in previous years BCA has received grants. It is now a condition of the grants that we have a foreign policy if the grant is to be used to support foreign reps going to meetings and individuals who carry out this work should make BCA aware if they wish to pursue this grant. The £500 under “Grants to Rep” is BCA money. Any grants have to be appropriate to our resources and individuals have to provide details to MD and BM, will depend on suitability as a participant, reports given etc.

8.3.12 – Tax – it is now all taxed, previously less than £10,000 did not need to pay corporation tax, estimated at £800 for next year. A discussion followed as to whether it is more tax efficient to be a charity and being a limited company was also discussed. BM pointed out that charity status had been looked at before, there are different criteria such as identifying a set of trustees but not much difference, as accounts still need to be prepared. Benefits of gift aiding subscriptions were also considered. DC to investigate further on charity status.

8.4 Accounts have not been audited, DC was asked if audited accounts would be available at the June meeting.

That the Treasurer’s report be accepted.

Prop: BM, Sec: CM. ***Agreed unanimously.***

Secretary’s Report was given at this point, as SF had arrived. For the purposes of the agenda, the original order will be retained.

9. Conservation & Access Officer's Report

EL gave a verbal report.

9.1 Thanks to the workers in each of the Regions and thanks to Legal & Insurance Officer, as many parts of the role have a legal nature.

9.2 National Trust – this is an ongoing saga but can report that it is close to finality and guidelines for caving and mine exploration will go on the web soon.

9.3 Access to the Coast – have been working closely with other outdoor pursuits. On 03/04/2008 the draft Marine Bill was published for consultation (the deadline is 26 June 2008) which covers coastal access. EL reported that through networks and written submissions, our views are being listened to. Noted that the responsibility for man-made objects is no longer that of the landowner which will be of benefit to mine explorers and cavers accessing gates. However, the Bill is not finalised yet but once it is, the plan is then to consider in-land waters which is much more of a concern in respect of the impact on cavers (although during a meeting in Wales with the Environmental Agency, it was asked what this was to do with cavers!). EL concluded that access is improving and this may trigger a revision of Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) and we want to keep this in the forefront as it would help areas such as Derbyshire.

9.4 NCA Codes – EL apologised for the lack of progress on the revision of the Codes.

That the C & A Officer's report be accepted.

Prop: DJ, Sec: AC. ***Agreed unanimously.***

10. Training Officer's Report (Written report tabled)

A report was sent to the Secretary but this was not distributed or made available prior to or at the meeting.

11. Equipment Officer's Report (Written report tabled) inc Rope Test Officer's Report

11.1 GJ asked why it took so long for volunteers to get their expenses paid. AP had passed the expenses to DC and DC confirmed that now the accounts are complete he will get the cheques out by the end of the week.

11.2 LW thanked BM, AP and the committee for the speedy resolution on Mendip, SK agreed. Asked which direction going in with anchors? AP advised that the tests need to be completed. BM advised that the Chinese anchor will be unique (although similar to the DMM anchor), so will know that these are BCA anchors and rigging guides will also be published under the scheme. OC queried the spec of the DMM anchor and pointed out that on occasions anchors had been found to be greasy which would affect the installation. AP noted that there has never been a catastrophic failure in caving, anchors do not just “pop out”. BM advised that have popped out in mountaineering, but these anchors have not been commercially manufactured and there is no training for installation. GJ said that in the installation procedure, the anchor should be cleaned and the grease removed but even if dirty and greasy, this will not cause them to fail.

11.3 Rope Test Officer's Report (Written report tabled)

BM believes that ropes are being used by cavers long after their natural lifetime, breaking within 2 or 3 drops. DJ queried use of word “characterising”. BM advised only take samples of 0.8m long including knots, whereas British Standards use 2m, consequently there is a difference in energy absorption, knots etc but we do not know if there is a difference in ropes as we would need a rig to take 2m.

OC asked if other tests have been undertaken for example using jammers as these are connected to a caver's personal kit and it needs to be known if a jammers will cut the rope. Also abseil devices. GJ pointed out that need to do all tests but resources are limited. BM is hoping to publish data on long-term rope tests in the next few months and to include usage figures. BM has a lot more work to be done with currently 600m outstanding to test.

That the Equipment Officer's and Rope Test Officer's reports be accepted.

Prop: LW, Sec: SK. ***Agreed unanimously.***

12. Publications & Information Officer's Report incl. Webmaster's Report

LW gave a verbal report.

12.1 Publications - Little has occurred with publications, except for the latest having been published by the Training Committee.

12.2 Speleology magazine - LW is mostly out of the loop with Speleology, but reported that a very overdue “bumper” issue has been recently published. Reminded all that BCA needs to provide content for Speleology. LW pointed out that with all the special committees, we need to ensure that information that people need to know about is distributed such as technical reports.

12.3 Website - The website is working and issues with Training Admin using the incorrect forms had been resolved. It is LW's intention to re-vamp the website from a cosmetic perspective later this year.

12.4 Web services – there have been problems with the host company and two customers were almost lost due to incompetence. This is being resolved by moving the service to a virtual server so we have more

control, and the costs are comparative. However, the moving of the service is consuming all LW's free time at the moment.

12.5 SK noted that the website is out of date, as recent minutes of meetings are not on there. LW advised that individual officers of BCA are responsible for content. SF apologised and advised that he was at fault for the absence of recent minutes on the website.

12.6 OC commented that the CDG website carries a record of recent rainfall and this may be useful for cavers on the BCA website. LW confirmed that this info is available for Mendip as well and whilst a good idea, he does not like to replicate info available elsewhere and would prefer to see a link. But if the website is to be linked, it needs to be regularly checked that the information is reliable, LW will look into this. BM asked what sites the website links to. LW only links to sites that we host to prevent such difficulties such as deciding which ones to link to, updating etc and would need to make clear that we are not responsible for the contents of other sites etc. JP made a plea to other Regional Councils to put updates about access on the BCA Forum, as she had noticed that the DCA access updates were getting lots of hits, she believed approximately 4,000 within about 10 days. It was discussed whether this figure could be correct and BM asked if LW could research this as BCA membership was less than 6,000 last year and this is a lot of hits. LW pointed out that he was not able to identify the numbers, as many of these could be repeat hits.

12.7 Old NCA website – LW reported that on the UK Caving Forum, one of the threads had provided a link to the old NCA website. As BCA blanket adopted the old NCA policies, these should be available on BCA website. MD agreed that should use this work and the NCA policies should be circulated first to Council members for approval and/or suggested improvements. BM added that there should be a statement advising that the NCA policies have been adopted by the BCA.

12.8 Newsletter Editor's Report (*Written report tabled*)

12.8.1 BM suggested that the next newsletter contains abbreviated reports.

12.8.2 Discussed publishing packages, MC to use Microsoft Publisher as familiar with this rather an Adobe InDesign.

12.8.3 MC is lacking the BCA logo, DW to send MC link.

12.9 Handbook Editor's Report (2008/09) (*Written report tabled*)

12.9.1 DW reported that 650 copies of the Handbook were printed last year, which was the right number. Fifty copies were distributed to caving shops to sell at no cost to them, Inglesport sold two.

12.9.2 The BCA Handbook 2008/09 is ready to be proof read, then printed. DW proposes to hand-deliver copies to caving shops this year. The handbook can be copied easily and it is available on the BCA website now which will reduce the need for additional copies being required.

12.9.3 DW had received a query from YSS as to whether fulltime students over 18 who were not joining their university club could purchase CIM membership at the full-time student rate through YSS. A detailed discussion followed as to the definition and intention of the full-time student rate and whether proof was required. CJ thought that the reduced rate was to encourage whole university clubs to go down the route of joining BCA. EL thought that it was not aimed solely at university clubs, but that any young person should be encouraged and the reduction should cover any full time student in any club. Proving whether a student is in full-time education is taken on trust, as is all data such as non-caving members. Agreed that DC would contact NW during the day for clarification, as this changes the membership scheme.

That the Publications & Information Officer's, Newsletter Editor's and Handbook Editor's reports be accepted.

Prop: JP, Sec: GJ. ***Agreed unanimously.***

13. Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

DJ gave a verbal report.

13.1 Liability Insurance – annual process of the renewal of the liability policy began December 2007. Have moved to a new broker (previous one was taken over by large company), now insured by Zurich, 6% increase in premium.

13.2 Child Protection Policy – DJ has been pursuing the Child Support Unit in Leicester and now has a recommended bibliography. Reminded Council that it was agreed at the last Council Meeting to circulate the Department for Culture, Media and Sport leaflet, “Helping keep your child safe in sport” together with a letter from BCA. GJ has been distributing letter and leaflets to Clubs. Policy on website, due to requests received.

13.3 Marine Bill – DJ pointed out the significance of this draft bill and the fact it covers man-made structures, not just mine shafts is very important and believes this was achieved by working with interested parties.

13.4 GJ reported that SUI had been chasing him for some time as concerns about insurance cover. DJ advised that French cover is taken out as well.

That the Legal & Insurance Officer’s report be accepted.

Prop: AP, Sec: LW. ***Agreed unanimously.***

14. "Try Caving" Initiative Report

CJ provided a verbal report.

14.1 “Try Caving” website – The website is continuing, but has a new web address and has been redirected to www.trycaving.org.uk (was .co.uk).

14.2 Try Caving leaflets – CJ reported that there are two boxes left and we need to think about ordering more some time this year. MD asked if leaflets were targeted, and whether a lot were just binned. CJ not sure. Ways of measuring impact of leaflets were discussed such as coupons on leaflets to send back, there is a poll on the website (but few people reply), could check with Karen Slatcher if people are coming back, as a lot of leaflets are going out in respect of professional training.

14.3 Caving posters – there appears to be a demand for caving posters, JP advised that professional instructors were asking if BCA have posters, SF had been asked by schools at the Outdoor Show. Posters have been designed by Jerry Woolridge, JP had some A4 posters. CJ offered to check posters, quantities, places they could go and evaluate what is required. LW can provide the image file if more are required.

14.4 Try Caving events – YSS had 16 people for a try caving weekend, who had not been caving before, a good example of try caving events working.

14.5 Try Caving article – CJ will produce an article for Descent or Speleology. It was pointed out that as this is a BCA initiative, articles should appear in Speleology. This should also include a note about the Outdoor Show.

14.6 Outdoor Show – this year, the BCA stand was managed by SF at a cost of about £1,000. Took 280+ names of persons interested in trying caving, and these will be sent out to the Regions on spreadsheets by CJ. BP pointed out he had received a response from the 2007 list some six weeks ago. CJ thanked all who helped at the Outdoor Show. Will hopefully be back next year but this depends upon YHA still having the cave as they are keen to get rid of it. The cave is getting tired and we could consider designing an artificial cave ourselves which is easily moved.

14.7 Cliffhanger – JP reported that DCA had taken on the role of organising Cliffhanger, 12-13 July 2008 in Sheffield. The Show’s organisers are really keen to have the YHA Cave, and if the cave is there, BCA will be allocated the front main space as the Cave will be one of the main attractions. Request was made to BCA for financial assistance for the event as there is equipment to be transported if Speleolympics can be used, scaffold poles to be hired etc and it could be linked to a Try Caving day in September. Agreed to provide assistance with transportation costs of collecting Speleolympics.

14.8 Future plans – Cliffhanger will target the Derbyshire area, BPC and YSS are very pro-active with Try Caving events, not so much is happening in Mendip, could be tied in with other events.

That the Youth Development Officer's report be accepted.

Prop: SK, Sec: AC. ***Agreed unanimously.***

15. Membership Administrator's Report (Written report tabled)

15.1 DC confirmed that he had spoken to NW who agreed all FT students, regardless of whether a member of a university club, could benefit from student membership status, as this does not affect the viability of the scheme in terms of numbers.

Resolution: Full-Time Student membership applies to all Under 18s and all those who are full-time students at the point of their membership application. ***Agreed unanimously.***

15.2 GJ has processed the bulk of applications and at a far quicker turnaround time. Hours required to perform the role will reduce this year but will continue to put the hours in where required.

That the Membership Administrator's report be accepted.

Prop: LW, Sec: BP. ***Agreed unanimously.***

16. Insurance Manager's Report

No separate report was received.

Other Annual Reports

17. Convenor's Report, Radon Working Party (Written report tabled)

That the Convenor's report be accepted.

Prop: BM, Sec: SF. ***Agreed unanimously.***

18. Cave Registry Coordinator's Report

DC gave a verbal report.

18.1 The Cambrian Registry is a working register, awaiting further data to be updated.

18.2 The Mendip Register is about to be published in hard copy and on the web.

That the Cave Registry Coordinator's report be accepted.

Prop: LW, Sec: DW. ***Agreed unanimously.***

19. International Representative's Report

No report received.

20. Reports from BCRA, Regional Councils etc

20.1 MD questioned whether this is still relevant but is an opportunity for regions to report on aspects of particular importance if they wished to.

20.2 GJ advised that the CNCC Technical Group had consolidated three previous rigging guides into one A4 document, £15.00.

21. Election of Officers and National Council Members:

SF confirmed that he had received no returns.

21.1 Treasurer, to serve for 3 years:

Treasurer: Dave Cooke

Prop: JP, Sec: AP. *Re-elected unopposed.*

21.2 Equipment Officer, to serve for 3 years:

Equipment Officer: Bob Mehew

Nominated by AP. *Elected unopposed.*

21.3 Publications & Information Officer, to serve for 3 years:

Publications & Information Officer: Les Williams

Prop: JP, Sec: DW. *Re-elected unopposed.*

21.4 2 Club representatives, to serve for 2 years:

Orpheus Caving Club Boyd Potts

Prop: JP, Sec: GJ. *Re-elected unopposed.*

Cwmbran CC Owen Clarke

Prop: DC, Sec: SF. *Re-elected unopposed.*

(Shropshire Scouts Caving Team - Idris Williams and South Wales Caving Club - Bernie Woodley are happy to continue to serve for their second year).

21.5 2 Individual Member representatives, to serve for 2 years:

Damian Weare

Prop: LW, Sec: CM. *Re-elected unopposed.*

Steve King is not able to continue to stand, no other nominations – 1 vacancy.

(Charles Milton and Emma Porter are happy to continue to serve for their second year).

Confirmed that Individual Member Reps can be DIMs or CIMs, as there is no difference in voting rights.

22. Proposals

None received by the due date.

Other Matters

23. Appointment of Auditor

23.1 DC is awaiting confirmation from auditor, Jane Whittaker. All in agreement.

24. Date of Annual General Meeting for 2009

24.1 Agreed as Saturday, 28th March 2009.

25. Any Other Business Notified in Advance to the Chairman

25.1 None was forthcoming.

Recorder: **Emma Porter**

The meeting closed at 3:04pm.