

Reports submitted to Council meeting on 18 July 2020

Using Zoom

Item 4.1

H Jones

BCA Treasurer Report to BCA Council July 2020

See Agenda v3

Item 4.2

H Jones

BCA Insurance Managers report to BCA Council July 2020

See Agenda v3

Item 5

David Rose

Discussion on Welsh Government Judicial Review

See Agenda v3

H Jones

Affordability of CRoW Legal Challenge

See Agenda v3

Item 6

R Namaghi

Proposals for Council (regarding Creation of the P & I Working Group, Changing Y&D back to a working group and the IT working group be updated)

See Agenda v3

R Namaghi

Proposals for Council

Preceding paper circulated on 11 May containing material referenced in main paper

Proposals for an Interim Council meeting

I would like to propose an interim Council meeting to achieve a couple of things important to the running of the BCA. I think sometime in July would be good but want the executive to respond. I also think that it would be good to livestream the proceedings.

The things needing doing are: the elections and appointments of critical positions and offloading proposals for the AGM that are more appropriate for council.

The reasons for this are:

The corona virus and its potential ongoing impact could really present a challenge for our members; we need a publications team with a media strategy to communicate with our members and we need to move on with our IT voting infrastructure to allow us the possibility of being an online only organisation for the next 18-24 months. I think that's an extreme scenario but realistically it would be irresponsible to be unprepared for it.

Though the AGM proposal list is already full, the fact that a very partisan agenda has been compiled means that we can expect many more motions prior to the next deadline. It's to be expected when no attempt at discourse is made beforehand. This could have been averted with some clear leadership; however, the best course of action now is to ensure adequate discussion and a functional AGM.

I would greatly appreciate comment and feedback as although I've had people look over the ToR listed I may have made a mistake. I can't find a standard format for ToR in BCA – I've obviously modelled them after the ones made for Y&D. If council prefer a less verbose format then I'm happy to reformat.

Agenda:

- 1 Creation of the P & I Working Group (terms of reference in appendices), and the dissolution of the post of Media liaison (responsibilities to be absorbed into the group).
- 2 Elections for the following roles:
 - A P&I Officer (for which I intend to stand)
 - B Y&D Officer (for which Josh White intends to stand, a stellar replacement who has done much work for Y&D over the last couple of years)
 - C Group representatives (a position which I have sent an application in for)
- 3 Appointment of IT Working Group Convenor (for which Ari Cooper Davies intends to stand: as a non-partisan candidate who is already involved with the technical business of the group and as far as I can tell is well liked in all quarters)
- 4 Changing Y&D back to a working group as changes to the manual of operations makes their terms of reference non-compliant with the workings of the BCA – it is easier and more beneficial to be a working group rather than a standing committee.
- 5 An emergency budget for Y&D as the potential for significant damage to our university club sector in the event of a prolonged covid lockdown. (This is still to be discussed appropriately with the relevant parties).
- 6 Discuss: That the P&I Standing Committee be reinstated.
This does not require an AGM motion to create – only that after an AGM all relevant participants be invited. This should be discussed if the working group proposal fails, otherwise can be removed from both this agenda and the AGM.

7 That the principle of the “One Stop Shop” and the provision of services to cavers, clubs and organisations form a fundamental part of the BCA and should be safeguarded.

There is no actual proposal here but rather a point of discussion – more suitable for a council meeting than a potentially raucous AGM where people might not be able to put forward their arguments. This may allow the meeting to propose a relevant amendment in time for an AGM.

8 That the IT working group be updated to the terms of reference set out in the appendices, and that the posts of webmaster, web services and cave registry, in addition to the national cave registry working group all be absorbed into this group.

9 That the National Council posts of Webmaster and Web Services Manager be abolished with their responsibilities being passed to the IT Committee or IT Working Group.

Reason: A motion put to the 2019 AGM defined the role of Webmaster such that it overlapped the existing terms of reference of the IT Working Group. This confliction about who takes what part of the role has led to difficulties and confusion. This proposal seeks to remove that problem by setting a clear chain of responsibility.

10 That the IT Working Group be abolished in accordance with clause 6.10 of the BCA Constitution. That a new Standing Committee be formed in accordance with clause 7 of the BCA Constitution to be known as the “IT Committee”. Its terms of reference are listed in the appendices. This requires no amendment to the constitution.

11 That the BCA National Council produces an appropriate Social Media Policy. To be completed by the 2021 AGM.

12 Potentially needed for the legal case]

Appendices

I Proposed terms of reference for Publications & Information Working Group:

These terms of reference were drafted on the 08/05/2018 and comply to both the BCA Constitution and its Manual of Operations.

i Purpose

- i. The aim of the group is to assist the BCA in; its self-promotion, engagement with its members and developing a clear media strategy.

ii Membership

- i. Members are to be invited by the P&I Officer
- ii. The convenor of the group will be the P&I Officer.
- iii. Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis and its members re-invited
- iv. There will not be any restrictions on numbers in these terms of reference, to allow it to reach an organic operable size.

iii Accountability

- i. The P&I Officer will report back to Council at meetings.
- ii. There will be an annual budget presented to the Association
- iii. There will be an annual report detailing the working group’s activities and general strategic plan.
- iv. Complaints are to follow BCA procedure and brought to Council.

iv Review

- i. This will be done annually and presented at the BCA AGM under the relevant subsection report.

v Methods

- i. Official meetings will occur at least once yearly with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- ii. The minutes will be published on the BCA website promptly.
- iii. The convenor of the group will prepare the agenda

II Proposed terms of reference for the Youth and Development Working Group:

These terms of reference were drafted on the 08/05/2018 and comply to both the BCA Constitution and its Manual of Operations.

i Purpose

- i. The aim of the group is to assist with and promote BCA Youth and Development projects.

ii Membership

- i. Members are to be invited by the Youth and Development Officer
- ii. Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis and its members re-invited
- iii. The convenor of the group will be the Youth and Development Officer.
- iv. There will not be any restrictions on numbers in these terms of reference, to allow it to reach an organic operable size.

iii Accountability

- i. The Youth and Development Officer will report back to Council at meetings.
- ii. There will be an annual budget presented to the Association
- iii. There will be an annual report detailing the working group's activities and general strategic plan.
- iv. Complaints are to follow BCA procedure and brought to Council.

iv Review

- i. This will be done annually and presented at the BCA AGM under the relevant subsection report.

v Methods

- i. Official meetings will occur at least once yearly with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- ii. The minutes will be published on the BCA website promptly.
- iii. The convenor of the group will prepare the agenda.

III Proposed terms of reference for IT Working Group:

These terms of reference were drafted on the 08/05/2018 and comply to both the BCA Constitution and its Manual of Operations.

i Purpose

- i. To manage and co-ordinate the BCA's IT infrastructure
- ii. To maintain and develop the BCA's website
- iii. To commission and implement IT projects as deemed desirable by BCA
- iv. To provide technical advice to the BCA and its membership.
- v. To maintain the National Cave Registry

ii Membership

- i. Members are to be invited by the IT working group
- ii. The convenor of the group will be the P&I Officer.
- iii. Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis and its members re-invited

iii Accountability

- i. The IT working group convenor will report back to Council at meetings.
- ii. There will be an annual budget presented to the Association
- iii. There will be an annual report detailing the working group's activities and general strategic plan.

III Proposed terms of reference for IT Working Group:

These terms of reference were drafted on the 08/05/2018 and comply to both the BCA Constitution and its Manual of Operations.

i Purpose

- i. To manage and co-ordinate the BCA's IT infrastructure
- ii. To maintain and develop the BCA's website
- iii. To commission and implement IT projects as deemed desirable by BCA
- iv. To provide technical advice to the BCA and its membership.
- v. To maintain the National Cave Registry

ii Membership

- i. Members are to be invited by the IT working group
- ii. The convenor of the group will be the P&I Officer.
- iii. Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis and its members re-invited

iii Accountability

- i. The IT working group convenor will report back to Council at meetings.
- ii. There will be an annual budget presented to the Association
- iii. There will be an annual report detailing the working group's activities and general strategic plan.
- iv. Complaints are to follow BCA procedure and brought to Council.
- v. Access to critical resources that are password protected must be given to the executive of the National Council

iv Review

- i. This will be done annually and presented at the BCA AGM under the relevant subsection report.

v Methods

- i. Official meetings will occur at least once yearly with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- ii. The minutes will be published on the BCA website promptly.
- iii. The convenor of the group will prepare the agenda.

IV IT Committee ToR

Its terms of reference shall be

- to manage and coordinate BCA's IT infrastructure.
- to commission and implement IT projects as deemed desirable for BCA.
- to provide a resource of expertise available to BCA.
- to provide Web Services to BCA members as seems desirable.

Item 7

R Myers

New Website

Preceding paper circulated on 11 May containing referenced material

See Agenda v3

Item 8.1

R Namhagi

BCA Voting Procedures Report

See Agenda v3

Item 8.2

A Cooper-Davies

IT & The BCA: Moving Forward

See Agenda v3

Item 8.3

A Eavis

BCA Media Liaison Officer's Report For the year June 2019 - 2020

Agenda v3

Item 8.3

D Rose

BCA Newsletter Report

Agenda v3

Item 8.5

N Atkins

BCA Training Officer Report July 2020

See Agenda v3

Item 8.6

A Eavis

BCA UIS Report for the year June 2019 to June 2020

See Agenda v3

Item 8.7

G Campion

Draft Report FSE Bureau August 2019 – July 2020

See Agenda v3

Item 8.8

G Thomas

Radon Working Group Report 9th July 2020

Agenda v3

Note a referenced report and a referenced spread sheet can be found as downloads at https://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=publications_information:radon

Item 8.9

J Potts

Library Report to BCA Council 18 July 2020

See Agenda v3

Item 7.10

J Parker-Smith

QMC report to Council – July 2020

See Agenda v3

Item 8

R Myers

Proposal for follow up Meeting:

See Agenda v3

Documents also issued by email from the Secretary prior to the meeting

Motion: Closure of complaint

I propose that current complaints originating from Charterhouse Caving Company are dismissed. As Phil Roswell has attempted to deal with these and no further action has been proposed, the complaint should have been closed at the last meeting.

Proposed: Will Burn, Direct Individual Member

Seconded: Rostam Namaghi, Youth and Development Officer

plus

CV of Josh White in support of his nomination for Youth and Development Officer

Youth & Development Officer

I'm running to be the new Youth and Development Officer. I've been involved with various projects over the last four years and not only do I want to carry on that good work that Rostam and others have done but also expand upon it.

I came into caving through scouting, and continue to be a scout leader. I ended up in Y&D as I was trying to make it easier for scouts who have become cave leaders to remain in scouting rather than being driven away by fees to volunteer. They put me to work pretty quickly, showing me the power of networking, advice and bringing people in. The experience it's given me has been great - I've negotiated on behalf of a BCA member club, carried out research, drafted documents and even learnt the lesson that not every project succeeds.

My aim for my time at Y&D is to bring the national youth caving team to fruition, as well as continuing the University Phoenix clubs project and being proactive in spotting problems throughout youth caving. One particular area I foresee an issue is university clubs losing momentum when coming out the back end of the Covid Lockdown, and this will require some attention.

These initiatives, coupled with the skills and knowledge I've developed, will strengthen youth caving and in turn ensure a future generation of cavers.

Group Representative

Coming from a non-caving region (West Sussex), I was fortunate to get involved in caving through a local scout caving team, that was also a BCA caving club (WSSC). I became a member of the Wessex Caving club shortly after, recognising the advantages of being a member of a caving club.

My more recent caving exploits have led me to become a member of the YSS, which again showed massively the advantages to cavers old and young, of being a member of a club, including but not limited to, accessibility to kit stores, having a base in a caving region and the ability to network with other cavers.

The recent removal of the two house system in BCA means that the group representatives are an increasingly important voice for groups to ensure that votes and decisions do not ignore what is in the best interests of caving clubs.

Through being a member of caving club outside of a major region, a club who is part of CSCC and a club who is part of CNCC, I've had exposure to the the different issues that clubs face, and the different historical issues that each region has, and I'd hope to be able to bring this experience to the role.

I'm active on most forms of social media as well as the ukcaving forums, and would ensure that I am approachable to those clubs who are wanting representation at council.

If any further details are needed, or if you think these are too long/short for what is needed, please let me know.

Thanks,

Josh

Plus a document referenced in the report for item 8.3

BCA IT

Introduction

In recent years the control of BCA IT facilities in the form of the BCA website, mailing lists, membership system and web services has become a proxy for wider control of the BCA. As a result the role of the BCA Council in determining the BCA's requirements has been side-lined.

It is not the role of a single person, an IT working group (as presently constituted) or standing committee to determine these requirements, but the wider membership as represented by Council and the executive.

The following are some of the key IT issues that the Council should consider. Some of these issues relate to motions submitted for the postponed AGM.

Web Services (hosting)

Currently the BCA operates two virtual private servers (VPS) hosting a number of BCA, BCRA, regional councils, caving clubs and a few personal and business web sites. The oldest server (britiac2) is running an unmaintained operating system and associated software also unmaintained. The second server (britiac3) is running an operating system that will not be maintained beyond November 2020, and the majority of hosted websites are using now unmaintained software with known vulnerabilities.

The original rationale to offer web hosting to other bodies, was that the BCA had excess capacity which could be used by the wider caving community. This is no longer true.

For several years britiac3 has suffered from a shortage of memory to the extent that the database which many sites rely on is frequently 'killed' when the server is overloaded by modest levels of traffic, this happens several times a week (see appendix for a recent incident summary). Regularly the server becomes unresponsive and requires rebooting. In some cases it has been unavailable for a number of hours.

Measures to prevent this either risk degrading the service for legitimate users or require more memory than is available. To operate a reliable service now needs greater investment and greater volunteer time and commitment than is available or reasonable to expect.

Domain Name management.

Domain name registration is a potentially useful service to member clubs and associated organisations. Most clubs etc. are unincorporated bodies and rely on individual members registering and renewing domain names on their behalf. This can and has resulted in the loss of domain names when an individual is either unwilling or unable to renew registrations.

Although the BCA currently offers this service, it is unclear if this shares this weakness relying on an individual. Is the BCA in the position to offer this service or does its status as an unincorporated association mean it suffers from the same risks.

Rights to software.

Software is licensed rather than bought, does the BCA have the ability as, as noted above, an unincorporated association, the ability to enter into these agreements, or does it rely on members acting on its behalf.

Electronic voting.

There is no evidence of any mechanism for a member of the BCA or outside observer to check the integrity of the voting process.

Council should determine the properties that any voting system must have to allow the membership to have full confidence in it, and document those properties. For example, should voting be anonymous? Can a voter confirm a vote has been recorded accurately and included in a count? These are not trivial problems and there is a body of academic literature considering them (all solutions rely on cryptography which is a notoriously difficult field). Any potential weakness may be used as a means to attack the legitimacy of the BCA's decisions.

There are a number of commercial providers and open source solutions available for online voting, these should be considered before committing to an 'in-house' solution. This is not a decision that should be delegated to an IT group of any nature.

Membership Administration

Membership administration is not an activity that is unique to the BCA. There are numerous commercial services offering membership management systems, including web sites/email communication/event management and fee collection. Pricing is based on membership numbers, and it would be reasonable to consider a commercial option before an 'in-house' custom system with the inherent risks, reliance on volunteers and maintenance overheads.

BCRA relationships

The current membership administration system is shared with the BCRA. BCRA web sites also rely on the BCA web services. Some recent changes have disrupted the BCRA's systems, with decisions being made without consultation. It is important that the user base of any of the BCA's systems is documented and considered before any changes are made.

Summary

It might be that Council decide to delegate these issues to a working group, in that event it is essential that any working group should not consist of only IT specialists, but represent the end users who should be in a majority. The costs of using commercial providers may be outweighed by the benefits of protecting the operation of the BCA from politically motivated manipulation and the over reliance on any one individual.

Angus Sawyer 13/05/2020

Appendix

Incidents of memory exhaustion that resulted in database shutdown.

May 1st – May 13th

May 1 16:46:18

May 2 12:17:17

May 4 03:45:45

May 4 03:45:45

May 4 05:45:00

May 4 05:45:00

May 5 01:01:06

May 6 00:01:03

May 6 00:01:03

May 7 04:55:35

May 7 05:39:35

May 7 05:39:35

May 7 21:18:52

May 10 21:10:10

May 11 14:41:02

May 12 21:05:03