



Final Minutes of the October 2019 Council Meeting

Held at Spanset, Telford Way, Middlewich, CW10 0HX
Saturday 12th October 2019

Chair: Les Williams
Secretary: Matt Ewles
Treasurer: Howard Jones
Recorder: Matt Ewles

Attendance

Position	Name	Initials	Present?
BCA Executive (voting, except Chairman who has a casting vote only in event of tie)			
Chairman	Les Williams	LW	Yes
Treasurer (also Insurance Manager)	Howard Jones	HJ	Yes
Secretary	Matt Ewles	ME	Yes
Officers or Chairs of Standing Committees (Voting)			
Training Officer	Nigel Atkins	NA	Yes
Conservation and Access Officer (resigned)	Louise Baddeley	LB	Absent
Equipment and Techniques Officer	Mark Sims	MS	Yes
Youth Development	Rostam Namaghi	RN	Absent
Publications and Information Officer	Jane Allen	JA	Yes
Regional Council Representatives (Voting, representative may change meeting to meeting)			
Cambrian Caving Council	Allan Richardson	AR	Yes
Council of Northern Caving Clubs	Tim Allen	TA	Yes
Council of Southern Caving Clubs	Alan Butcher	AB	Yes
Derbyshire Caving Association	Jenny Potts	JP	Yes
Devon and Cornwall Underground Council	David Jean	DJ	Yes
Constituent Body Representatives (Voting, representative may change meeting to meeting)			
William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust	Richard Vooght	RV	Yes
Association of Caving Instructors	Stephan Natynczuk	SN	Yes
National Caving Scout Active Support Unit	Tony Radmall	TR	Yes
British Cave Research Association	Jo White	JW	Yes
National Association of Mining History Organisations			Absent
Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (and FSE vice rep)	David Botcherby	DB	Yes
Cave Diving Group			Absent
British Cave Rescue Council			Absent
Group/Club Representatives (Voting)			
Position 1 (2019-2021) (Also Vision Group Convenor)	Hellie Adams	HA	Yes
Position 2 (2019-2021) (also Webmaster)	Gary Douthwaite	GD	Yes
Position 3 (2018-2020)	Idris Williams	IW	Absent
Position 4 (2018-2020)	John Hine	JH	Absent
Individual Member Representatives (Voting)			
Position 1 (2019-2021) (and joint BCA rep to UIS)	Phil Rowsell	PR	Yes
Position 2 (2019-2021)	POSITION VACANT		
Position 3 (2018-2020)	Andrew McLeod	AM	Yes
Position 4 (2018-2020)	POSITION VACANT		
Position 5 (2019-2021) (One off position)	Will Burn	WB	Yes
Additional BCA positions or Observers (non-voting roles)			
Media Liaison and UIS representative	Andy Eavis	AE	Absent
European Speleological Federation (FSE) rep	Ged Campion	GC	Absent
QMC Chair	Juliet Parker Smith	JPS	Absent
Rope Testing	Bob Mehew	BM	Absent
Membership Administrator	Wendy Williams	WW	Yes
Training Administrator	Mary Wilde	MW	Absent
IT Working Group/Web Services/Cave Registry	David Cooke	DC	Yes
Newsletter Editor and CrOW Liaison	David Rose	DR	Absent
Radon Working Group	Gethin Thomas	GT	Yes
Safeguarding Officer	Chris Boardman	CB	Yes
Observer (interested in C&A position)	Claire Ross	CR	Yes
Observer	Wayne Sheldon	WS	Yes
Observer (UCET)	Ian Adams	IA	Yes
Observer (UCET)	Robin Jones	RJ	Yes

The meeting opened at 10:38am with a round of introductions and an appeal from LW to keep the meeting civil and friendly.

1. Apologies

The following apologies were noted either in advance or on the day:

David Brock (on behalf of CDG), Rostam Namaghi (Youth Development), Ged Campion (FSE), Steve Holding (NAMHO), Juliet Parker-Smith (QMC), John Hine (Group Rep), Idris Williams (Group Rep), Andy Eavis (Media Liaison/UIS), David Rose (Newsletter/CRoW).

Note; David Rose joined remotely for a short part of the meeting.

2. Declaration of items for Any Other Business

DC declared a matter about Council members discussing business on UKCaving.

3. Acceptance of minutes from the June Council meeting

Attendance list: ME said adding WS to the attendance list had already been emailed to him.

Section 3; DC commented that he did not expect his email detailing changes to the April minutes to be reproduced in full and asked for the line “you haven’t got rid of me yet” to be removed.

Section 4; Newsletter action item; DC requested that ‘soft option’ is replaced with ‘soft opt-in’.

Section 5; PR commented that he was appointed a joint BCA representative to UIS; this should be reflected in the minutes.

Additionally; DC felt that some of the corrections to the April minutes had not been implemented.

Action: ME to investigate omitted changes to April minutes.

ME appealed for all future corrections to be emailed in advance to save time at the meeting.

Acceptance of June minutes with changes:	Votes in favour: 15
	Votes against: 0
	Abstentions: 4

Action: ME to make corrections/changes above and publish June minutes as final.

4. Any matters arising or updates on action items from June Council meeting and also the Annual General Meeting.

ME talked through the various action items presented in the agenda. These are shown below and minuted comments on the resulting discussion are shown in blue/italic text.

Responsibility	Action	Line
ME	Make corrections to April minutes and publish as final. <i>Done (revisit needed considering earlier discussion).</i>	1
AR	Set up CO ₂ group and arrange preliminary meeting. <i>AR has held various discussions and recommends discontinuing this from a BCA perspective. This could be handed over to the BCRA.</i>	2
Executive	<p>Discuss and agree venues for future meetings.</p> <p><i>ME explained the various venues presented in the agenda; Chaddesley Corbett village hall has ample parking, a good room, a walking distance pub, is not too far from M5, has Wi-Fi and is further south than Spanset. ME confirmed this is booked for January and if it is good, we can alternate with Spanset.</i></p> <p><i>JP commented on Hulland Ward for the AGM and felt it would offer all the amenities the BCA would need. AB believed that it was the CSCC's turn to host the BCA AGM weekend. ME explained that he wished to stop the touring of the AGM around the regions and instead identify a central venue. AB believed that moving around the regions was the best way to engage with cavers, and said that the CSCC have volunteered to host the 2020 AGM. JA felt that the issue with a party weekend is that you get a lot of attendees there for the party but not the AGM; she felt there are better ways to engage with cavers.</i></p> <p><i>WB commented that the regional demographic of attendance would become irrelevant once online voting became available.</i></p> <p><i>AB felt that putting on a good party was a good way to encourage people along. TA said that AGMs always used to be at Alvechurch, and that moving the meetings around was AE's idea to help engage with cavers, however, he felt it hasn't been moving around equally. LW thought the recent AGM was evidence that people are attending the meeting when in a caving region. PR suggested we needed to promote people to come to the AGM, and HA agreed, saying that people have no connection to the BCA and putting on an event is a way to help people engage, although JA felt Hidden Earth is a better place for this. TR equally supported moving around the regions.</i></p> <p><i>ME concluded that the feeling of the room was in support of continuing the moving around of the AGM weekend, so this is what we should do. A vote was taken to support this; 17 votes in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention. ME accepted the offer of the CSCC to organise and host the 2020 AGM in Priddy.</i></p> <p><i>Action: CSCC to organise AGM weekend 2020; report to ME on details.</i></p>	3

RN/NA/LB/MS	Review and update Standing Committee website content. New content can be updated by the SC chairs directly or emailed to Gary (webmaster). <i>GD appealed for everyone to check their website section and either update it themselves or send any updates to him to implement. ACTION ALL</i>	4
JA	Promote new BCA expedition insurance. <i>Done; Descent, newsletter, social media, website and Hidden Earth. JA felt we could still do more. There is now a promo card for people to take away from the meeting; she suggested posting this out with the next newsletter. LW asked if we could get posters made for huts?</i> <i>LW asked whether PJ Hayman were happy with the uptake of their new policy? HJ said yes, but as the launch this year missed the uptake for 2019 expeditions there is a focus on 2020 expeditions and holidays before we can judge whether the scheme has been successful/popular.</i> <i>JA commented that we had done quite enough to promote this on behalf of the insurance company, but more work was planned from the PJ Hayman side to help with future promotion.</i> <i>PR asked whether we've done any comparison between the BCA policy and Snowcard? HJ commented that it's important to ensure any comparison is fair. ME felt we should focus on telling people that the BCA policy is available and what it offers, but steer clear of any comparisons or telling people that our policy is better as this is too subjective and case-specific; people need to make their own mind up what is right for them.</i> <i>LW said that there are benefits to the BCA policy; specifically, that it covers existing medical conditions. HJ commented that many foreign based insurers have recently increased prices due to Brexit uncertainty.</i>	5
CB/ME	Grievance procedure and disciplinary policy to be reviewed. <i>ME confirmed no action yet; Ongoing.</i>	6
ME	Add approved QMC Terms of Reference and role to Manual of Operations. <i>Done (by Robin Weare).</i>	7
HJ	Invest £50,000 in structured deposit account. <i>HJ confirmed that he has looked at four different options, but this agenda item is currently 'parked' until an appropriate option comes along. Discontinue as a live action item for now.</i>	8
HJ	Discuss use of "surplus funds" with Finance Committee & report back. <i>See proposal from HJ in this agenda.</i>	9
ME	Table discussion about email distribution of newsletter for October meeting. <i>DC clarified that in previous meetings a soft opt-in was suggested to allow people to opt-in to receiving the newsletter, however, this needs programming effort and all DC's time has been focussed on the ballot email system.</i> Action: DC Continue work on this; update to next meeting.	10

ME	Table discussion on Associate Membership rates for October meeting. <i>Specific agenda item later.</i>	11
ME	Table discussion on dates of future meetings for October meeting; possibility of moving April dates to March on recommendation of former Secretary? <i>Specific agenda item later.</i>	12

Actions from AGM relevant to next Council meeting:

Responsibility	Action	Line
ME	Update 2018 AGM minutes with corrections and publish as final. <i>Done.</i>	13
HJ	Report on progress of instructor insurance to October Council meeting. <i>See Insurance Manager report.</i>	14
ME/HJ	ME to table personal accident insurance for discussion at October Council meeting and HJ to present budget with and without this. <i>Proposal included in agenda; budget presented as separate document.</i>	15
ME	Table liability insurance value (i.e. raising to £10m, just for Minera or for entire policy) for discussion at the October Council Meeting. <i>LW confirmed that nothing is pressing from the CSCC on this. More discussion in Insurance Manager report.</i>	16
ME	Table a review of Manual of Operations with respect to procedures for applying for positions and submitting proposals for the October meeting. <i>See separate agenda item.</i>	17
ME/GD	Update BCA website with policies accepted at this meeting. <i>Done.</i>	18
ME/GD	Update BCA website with new BCA Council members. <i>Done. ME added that he has worked with GD to restructure the contacts page to make it more understandable.</i>	19
ME/GD	Update Manual of Operations with new Standing Committee terms of reference accepted at this meeting. <i>Done.</i>	20
JA	Progress New to Caving leaflet to production and distribution. <i>Done. JA appealed for people to take some leaflets away from this meeting to distribute appropriately to locations where people may be interested in trying caving. More perspex holders have been ordered. JA would like to create a central hub in each region for a stock.</i>	21
GD	Finalise new logo and compile 'press pack' for new logo and distribute as quickly as possible and update on website. <i>Done.</i>	22
ME/GD	Update Manual of Operations accordingly for removal of Publications and Information Standing Committee. <i>Forms part of more significant rewrite of various sections of the MoO proposed at this meeting.</i>	23
Exec/DC/WW/ GD	Progress constitutional changes proposed by ME (regarding two house voting) to a ballot of all members.	24

	<p><i>ME provided an update on the situation; planned launch mid-October to finish end of November. Text for approval in later agenda item. GD has built the system and this is awaiting testing. Katie Eavis has agreed to be Returning Officer for postal ballots. DC said that for the sending side of the email system he wants to use a commercial mailing service as it gives less spam and means Officers can't be accused of tampering. He has recruited Ari Cooper-Davis to deal with the email sending.</i></p> <p><i>DC said the emailing is proving problematic and is bouncing too many emails; need to change provider which is likely to introduce a delay. LW asked what we did for the ballot last time? DC said that BM emailed out from his own personal computer in batches [post-meeting note from DC; BCA Servers were also used to email out some of the ballot papers]. LW asked if we couldn't just use our own internal email systems and not worry about the concerns about staying arms-length from the ballot email. DC confirmed he is looking into Mail Chimp. LW felt we didn't need to worry about Officers tampering with the ballot; JA asked whether we are really going to get accused of this? DC believed yes, as he has already been accused of being untrustworthy. HA asked what GD thoughts were; GD felt we need a stopgap measure to get this ballot moving and felt that it would be fine on internal systems for this ballot. HA urged faith in our own Council members to conduct the ballot properly. MS agreed and didn't believe anyone in the room would interfere with a vote, and considering the issues and timeframes, he believed we should go ahead with our own internal systems. GD explained that as he would be running the ballot software, he would always have access; no system is infallible. AB felt that the fact we were having these discussions was indication that we had to defend ourselves from criticism. WB believed it wasn't about whether we trust eachother; it's whether our members trust us.</i></p> <p><i>PR asked how much delay this was going to incur if we continue to pursue an external email option. LR advised that Survey Monkey could be set up in just a few days. LW suggested we allow a short time for DC to explore commercial options, after which we will have to go with our own in-house approach. DC suggested looking at Mail Chimp and Survey Monkey over the next few weeks and if no success, fall back on our own systems.</i></p> <p><i>Proposal: Explore alternative commercial options for two weeks and if unsuccessful, DC is authorised to run the ballot using in-house systems to ensure the ballot is sent out no later than 31st October.</i></p> <p><i>Votes in favour: 18 Votes against: 1 Abstentions: 1</i></p> <p><i>Action: DC action this proposal.</i></p> <p><i>GD commented that a dummy run of the ballot would happen soon using just Council members to test the system.</i></p>	
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5. Reports (available in separate document)

5.1 Chair (Les Williams)

LW confirmed there was nothing specific to report, but he has been working with the Executive on various matters.

5.2 Secretary (Matt Ewles)

JP asked whether we want to deal with ME's suggestions in his report (regarding the CSCC proposals) now; ME commented that this forms a separate agenda item and should be revisited later. AB said that he was heartened by ME's responses.

ME asked if Council is happy with the unwillingness of DC to grant the accesses to GD that were mandated by his accepted AGM proposal. DC felt there are several things going on here. Firstly the IT Working Party is a team and should be working together; he felt that communication was an issue. DC believed GD has all the passwords he needs for everything except the membership databases. PR asked if we are proposing read only access or ready-write access? After some discussion, ME referred to his original proposal. DC agreed with PR that he needs confidence that GD isn't just going to wade in a mess up the database, and that this is also a matter of data protection and integrity.

DC felt it wasn't appropriate to be discussing this now and that, to date, GD hasn't given him any good reason for wanting access. WB said that this was voted on and agreed at the AGM, and now we need to implement this. DC commented that Council doesn't have to do what the AGM says.

MS cited the AGM minutes with respect to ME's accepted proposal and felt that we as a Council should be supporting this unless there is very good reason not to. He said he would feel uncomfortable not to be supporting what had happened at the AGM.

HA suggested Council should just vote on whether to support this.

TA believed that allowing GD the accesses is important for resilience and to ensure other people are able to do things. The AGM had clear support for Gary's ability and no question of his integrity. He supported MS's comment and said that one person cannot overrule the AGM's wishes.

JP said she has printed the agenda item from the AGM and cannot understand it, and that she had not read this fully at the AGM. She felt she approved this without fully understanding it and assumed that GD would be working with the IT Working Party. She felt a lot of people would be in a similar situation. JP also commented that Council cannot direct one of their members to undertake actions that are against their conscience.

DB asked GD why he needs access to the membership database. GD said that he wants to look at redevelopment of BCA Online and our communication systems as mentioned in the proposals, and without being able to see the membership database, he can't. JP asked whether read only access would be sufficient? PR felt that this would be a good start.

MS sympathised that some people may not have read the full proposal, however, it has been voted upon and accepted and he felt that those who did read it would expect it to be acted upon. He also questioned whether there was a compelling reason GD shouldn't have access. DC cited the data

protection act; saying that GD doesn't have good reason to look at the data. HA disagreed and felt GD did have good reason; because the membership at the AGM had supported him in his agenda. DC would like GD to have a discussion with him to decide how best to go about this.

TA put forward a proposal; that Council supports the accepted AGM motion (which he read out in full).

PR suggested an addendum to the proposal to ensure that Council accepts any data protection liability issues associated with GD being given access to the data.

ME expressed serious anger about the direction the discussion was taking, citing DC's concerns that GD would 'mess up the database', the various suggestions to only grant read-only access to prevent this, and the more recent suggestion of Council addressing liability about GD being given access. ME said it was disgraceful and offensive that GD's integrity was being called into question in these ways.

GD asked for clarification on the data protection act reasoning; why do other people (such as David Gibson) who are not elected to any BCA position have full access, yet he, as webmaster with a mandate from the AGM, cannot have access? DC replied that David Gibson has been given access by Council because he helps with the processing of the DIM and BCRA memberships.

DC raised concern over the use of the words 'exclusive access' in the first bulletpoint of ME's original AGM proposal. JP agreed that this was problematic and suggested that this should be sent back to the IT Working Party to sort out. HA asked whether the word 'exclusive' could be removed. GD clarified that the word 'exclusive' was used in respect to the public-facing parts of the website only. ME said he would accept this as a retrospective clarification of this meaning at this meeting.

DC asked whether the Webmaster was answerable to the IT Working Party. He felt that BCA Online falls under the IT Working Party remit and questioned whether GD will listen to them.

An amended version of TA's proposal was put to a vote:

"Council support the AGM Motion ("The AGM instructs BCA Council to appoint Gary Douthwaite as BCA webmaster, with a mandate to redevelop the website including, but not limited to BCA online and communications systems, and that Gary is provided with the necessary accesses and mandates as outlined in Appendix 7 to fulfil this role") and BCA Council are prepared to take any liability for the misuse of data of its members."

Votes in favour: 17

Votes against: 2

Abstentions: 2

Actions: DC to provide GD the accesses as outlined immediately.

5.3 Treasurer (Howard Jones)

HJ said he had nothing to add, other than asking regions other than CNCC to put in their claims for 2018 before the end of December, otherwise they won't be payable according to the funding rules.

5.4 Membership Administrator (Wendy Williams)

No report has been submitted in advance; a report was handed around the meeting (Appendix 1).

WW confirmed that USSCC have provided all suitable paperwork and so we can vote on whether to accept them as members.

Votes in favour of USSCC as a BCA member club: 20 (no abstentions/votes against); Passed.

5.5 Insurance Manager (Howard Jones)

HJ confirmed that 9 underwriters have said they are not interested in the instructor insurance business as the pool of people to take this on is just too small given a potential £5m liability. Hiscox (BCA's insurer) have quoted a policy at £750pp which is too expensive and unlikely to be taken up.

JA asked if we could subsidise instructor insurance, given that this is a big issue at the moment? HA clarified that you don't have to be a BCA member to be a cave instructor (i.e. we could end up doing this for non-members). GT said this wasn't entirely true. He thanked HJ for his work looking into this and felt it was a tricky situation, as although the instructors make money out of their work, they are also giving a lot back to caving. GT clarified that this is insurance for trainer assessors only (i.e. not for general cave leaders/instructors), these are people who deliver the training assessment courses, around 50 people in total (most of whom are employed and therefore have insurance). LW suggested further discussion outside of the meeting. TA felt that the BCA already pays extra for additional cover associated with the likes of the EUG, and that this was just another example of where additional cover was relevant.

Action: HJ/JPS to work offline to investigate this further and report to next meeting.

Regarding personal accident insurance, HJ confirmed that this was brought up in June on the basis we had lots of money and a large annual surplus, but since then he has received 11 separate suggestions for spending. On the grounds that these suggestions appear likely to see us pass a budget with a deficit for the first time in years, and BCRA appear likely to have considerable funding needs in coming years, he proposed that personal accident insurance option is taken off the table for now. He believed we should not be taking personal accident insurance while BCRA's funding future is in doubt. This course of action was seconded by JA and accepted unanimously.

TA clarified that the CNCC would have voted against personal accident insurance, and CDG would also have done so (CDG had provided a statement to read out; Appendix 4).

With respect to insurance liability of £10m for landowners, HJ said he has spoken to three landowners who originally asked for £10m and they have now accepted £5m, so no action needed, however, this may need to be revisited in future years with a potential extra cost of some £7,000 per annum.

5.6 Conservation and Access Officer (Louise Baddeley)

LB not present and has resigned; CR present at meeting as prospective candidate. The C&A proposal is included later in the meeting.

5.7 CRoW Working Party (David Rose)

DR not present. No questions.

5.8 Publications and Information Officer (Jane Allen)

Action: Create poster to inform members about expedition insurance

JA appealed for anyone running a caving Facebook page to share BCA posts.

JA said she has not had time to design a new Descent article and the deadline for the next issue is the end of October. For the last few issues we've promoted the expedition insurance with our advert, but we should probably now return to the 'what does the BCA do for me' advert for this next issue, and then after that we need something fresh. CB suggested highlighting one aspect of BCA's work at a time; ME supported this and felt it would be an excellent idea to cycle through adverts for the BCA's various facets to educate members about all the various things the BCA does.

JA felt BCA should be included in the Hidden Earth naming; LW confirmed that Hidden Earth is already branded as a BCA/BCRA sponsored event. CR suggested that we should be looking at a formal sponsorship agreement under these situations.

PR thought BCA should be giving more money to Hidden Earth to encourage attendance by reducing entry costs; LW disagreed, saying that the driving costs exceeded the costs of getting into the event for most people. NA suggested we could subsidise it for students or children. JW believed that the date was more of an issue for students than the price, but DB disagreed and felt the price was also problematic.

5.9 Newsletter Editor (David Rose)

LW clarified that the BCA has distributed its newsletter in hard copy before, so this is a slight inaccuracy in DR's report.

JA asked what percentage of our membership are now signed up to receive the newsletter by email; confirmed as 8%; DC said the numbers haven't changed much and getting the soft opt-in addressed was an ongoing matter but had been deprioritised due to work on the ballot.

5.10 British Caving Library (Jenny Potts)

JP has approached HJ for funding for a clerical assistant at the British Caving Library (note; this was submitted as an item for consideration too late for the agenda, but was circulated by email to the BCA Council list. The document is included in Appendix 2). This will be discussed under Any Other Business.

JP confirmed that the Yorkshire Ramblers Club have withdrawn their library from Leeds Library and given it to the BCA Library; lots of work to do to sort this out.

5.11 Media Liaison (Andy Eavis)

AE not present. No questions.

5.12 Cave Registry (David Cooke)

No questions.

5.13 Webmaster (Gary Douthwaite)

No questions. GD reiterated his earlier appeal for people to review the content of the website with respect to their particular area and to either update it themselves or email new content to him.

5.14 Web Services (David Cooke) and 5.15 IT Working Party (David Cooke) (combined report)

DC emphasised that some changes being discussed to membership later would require some back-end software work to be done.

DC asked for guidance with respect to the role of the webmaster. He read out the terms of reference of the IT Working Party (found in the Manual of Operations). He felt the teamwork wasn't working and we need to decide what the parameters are of the webmaster's role. LW suggested that this should go to the IT Working Party to discuss. DC asked whether the Webmaster would have to go along with the agreement of the IT Working Party; LW said no, but they should come up with some suggestions for a future Council meeting to discuss and vote upon. AM felt that the vote that has already been taken in respect to ME's AGM proposal should be used to guide the IT Working Party in these suggestions. AB emphasised that discontent was not to anyone's advantage and we need better clarification of who does what. CR asked if we have job descriptions; no, but we do have terms of reference.

TA suggested that the IT Working Party should be expanded, for example, filling the space left by Matt Wire; LW felt that nobody would disagree with more people getting involved. DC listed the members of the IT Working Party: Himself, David Gibson, Angus Sawyer, Matt Voysey, Gary Douthwaite, Les Williams (Executive representative) and now Ari Cooper-Davis.

MS felt that the obvious thing to do was for the IT Working Party to go away and come up with proposals or suggestions for Council to vote upon.

Action: IT Working Party to discuss individual roles and report back to Council.

5.16 Training Officer (Nigel Atkins)

JA said that NA has sent her details of all the various upcoming workshops and these are great! JP suggested that people keen to get into caving could be pointed towards these courses. NA asked how we go about getting new people into caving; he felt this is going to be a focus over coming years. LW asked if the Training Committee are looking at training other than ropes and ladders; NA confirmed yes (e.g. photography workshops being arranged). The list of upcoming events was passed around.

5.17 Qualifications Management Committee (Juliet Parker-Smith)

SN said that we had lost two well known personalities this year (Dave Elliot and Nigel Ball) and would like to create an award in their memory. A suggestion has been put forward to name an award already

coming in from the voluntary sector in honour of them; are Council happy? No objections were raised. JA asked for a press release once this is finalised which she will promote.

Action: QMC to proceed as planned and provide JA with press release once renaming is complete.

5.18 Equipment and Techniques Officer (Mark Sims)

No questions.

5.19 Rope Testing (Bob Mehew)

MS confirmed there was nothing for Council discussion.

5.20 Youth Development Officer (Rostam Namaghi)

WB said that there is no report from RN and that he (WB) is representing Youth Development. He said that there is a group in Yorkshire currently trialling an under-18s caving youth club. They are watching how well this works and may bring future proposals off the back of this.

5.21 Vision Working Party (Hellie Adams)

HA apologised for not providing a report in advance. There have been a few meetings of the Vision Group and some interesting ideas raised, including suggestions at Hidden Earth, but the Vision Group is struggling for people at the moment. It would be good to finalise a mission statement. HA felt that BCA wanting a new vision means moving forward and she has been apprehensive about dragging history into the future; she has been put off by lots of the personal attacks going around at the moment.

NA thanked HA for her excellent talk at Hidden Earth, and JA added that HA was really enthusiastic on the BCA stall, ensuring that everyone who went past were encouraged to leave feedback.

5.22 Safeguarding (Chris Boardman)

CB confirmed that BCA can now do DBS checks and that two have been done so far at £7.60 each. These were paid for by BCA. The most recent one was returned by the Government in <4hr! He wants to make the process as easy as possible. LW suggested HJ may need to budget for this if lots more members ask to be DBS checked; CB felt this was unlikely, but if numbers do grow, he will bring this to attention of Council. CB felt the biggest challenge was working out how to get more groups to be willing to take young people caving.

Break for lunch: 13:20pm

Reconvened: 13:53pm

5.23 Radon Working Party (Gethin Thomas)

GT said he had been doing radon testing over the summer in collaboration with the MoD and the data coming back confirms high radon levels at various sites, but this was still an incomplete dataset. He asked if there is support for further monitoring (as per agenda item 13).

GT confirmed that approximately 1/3 of the funds requested would be used this year and 2/3 next year, and that the aim is to get data to cover an annual cycle of radon levels. The current measurements are limited to summer when radon is at its highest and continued monitoring is needed to get an annual average to be calculated (which is the value of greatest importance).

WB asked whether the data would be available to members? GT said yes, although there were some concerns about possible access issues if landowners misinterpret the data, so some thought about how the data is used was needed.

PR felt this was great work and expressed regret that BCA didn't fully fund this from the start to ensure the data is exclusively ours. He enthused that we should fund it from this point onwards.

HJ asked whether the output would be just data, or would it include an interpretation? GT explained that there are plans to work with the HSE to allow the data to be used to put forward recommendations, e.g. a spreadsheet to allow people to track their exposure. He feels the BCA is the only body that can continue to support this. LW suggested the mandate should include an update to the radon document, although GT felt a much more useful and simplified document could also be put together.

HJ asked, given this being an update on work done before, when will it have to be done again in the future? LW said that this will depend on when HSE regulations change.

LW believed that this had some potential to damage access if the data isn't managed correctly, and suggested that we postpone discussion on data management until after the data is generated.

NA wished to ensure the data being generated is relevant to cavers, and the locations in caves that cavers tend to go and gather. He felt there had been some resentment over previous work not having been relevant. SN disagreed and argued that the former placements had been made with cavers in mind. GT clarified that ensuring the data is relevant to cavers is the next step in the project.

PR proposed that we approve the requested sum now (£4132.90), with review next year if more funding is required. This was unanimously supported.

Action: GT see Radon work continued and report back to Council on progress.

5.24 Carbon Dioxide Group (Allan Richardson)

Group/action discontinued, see earlier notes.

5.25 UIS Representative (Andy Eavis)

PR commented that UIS is trying to increase its profile and promote caving with an International Year of Caves and Karst 2021, and would like support for this. JA suggested they get directly in touch with her.

Action: PR/AE to put UIS people in touch with JA for promotion of their efforts.

5.26 FSE Representative (Ged Campion)

AR confirmed an inaccuracy in the report provided; the next conference is the last week of July 2020, not August.

Additional reports; BCA age demographic report (Tim Allen)

TA asked whether we want to continue collecting year of birth data as part of our membership process? He felt it has been extremely useful and further data would be equally so. Kay Easton, who did the statistics, is happy to help and could work with WW to collect future data.

TA suggested amending the wording in the membership forms to more strongly encourage provision of year of birth; LW urged against making this compulsory but said we could strengthen our request for this to be provided.

A vote was taken to support continued collection of year of birth data, and to make the wording asking for this more strongly encouraging. This received almost unanimous support (1 abstention).

Action; TA work with Membership team to review wording regarding year of birth.

PR emphasised how useful having this sort of data is, having recently done something similar in Ghar Parau, and suggested that we might want to consider collecting gender data too.

A vote was held to accept the reports: This was supported unanimously.

(6) Membership fees 2020 including proposals

6.1: Proposal by Matt Ewles to abolish couples DIM membership

ME explained that the aim in this proposal was to see the discount given to couples abolished as it does not reflect any real world saving to the BCA. ME explained that he has understood the note from David Gibson (see supplementary reports document) that the membership system does not allow for removal of this a membership category. Therefore, ME confirmed he would be happy for the category to remain but for it to be priced at the cost of two DIM members (no discount).

DC asked ME if he had discussed this with the membership team ahead of the meeting; ME confirmed he had not.

ME clarified the change to his proposal; Amend couples' membership to the price of two DIMs. This was seconded by WB and received unanimous support.

Action; Amend membership rate for couples to 2xDIM rate

6.2: Proposal by Matt Ewles to bring DIM rates down to match CIM rates

ME explained that he felt it was unfair DIMs were being charged a higher rate which didn't reflect any additional costs to the BCA. He said however he acknowledges David Gibson's comments (see supplementary reports document) that there are additional costs including personal attention of the Membership Administrator and personal postage of the membership card. ME said he would be willing to compromise and accept a DIM rate that was only higher than the CIM rate by a value which reflected the true additional cost to the BCA (he suggested £2 more as an example, rather than the current £5 more that DIMs pay).

JW emphasised David Gibson's comments that making this change would mean we would need to allow CIMs to join the BCRA, which would create extra work. ME said he didn't understand why the BCRA should be preventing BCA from changing its membership prices.

HA felt that making it the same price to be a DIM might encourage more people to take DIM membership and thus also join the BCRA (you have to be a DIM to join BCRA).

JW felt this needs looking into, as the current system does not work well for the BCRA. She said there are two solutions; (A) Abolish BCRA membership entirely and BCA entirely fund BCRA as it's 'science wing' or (B) Abolish CIM membership. LW supported BCA funding the BCRA directly and therefore option (A) which would see the BCRA brought into the BCA completely.

DC commented that DIMs pay online via Paypal (80p cost) and then it is about 60p to post their membership card, plus additional time from WW, so there are additional costs for processing DIMs. DB asked why people can't pay by bank transfer or direct debit rather than Paypal? DC said direct debit costs too much (approximately £400 setup fee) but this is under periodic review. He is currently looking into GoCardless.

JP agreed that we need a price differential to cover the additional costs of processing DIMs and to ensure a differentiation in price for the purposes of BCRA membership.

TA felt the additional cost of processing DIMs would be offset by the extra amount they have been unfairly paying compared to CIMs for many years now.

HA clarified that MEs proposal is purely about BCA membership and did not understand why this impacted BCRA or clubs; ME was similarly confused and asked for more clarification. JP felt that reducing DIM rate to the same as CIM rate will discourage people from getting BCA membership via clubs and therefore this will increase workloads for club Secretaries as they will have to keep more track of which of their members are DIM and which are CIM.

DB felt this showed that the entire membership structure needs looking at on a higher level.

DC felt ME's proposal undermines club membership because the benefit of cheaper BCA membership via a club will be removed.

ME clarified that having listened to the concerns, he would be happy for two options to be voted upon; his original proposal (same price for CIM and DIM) and an amended proposal which would see DIMs charged only £2 more to cover additional processing costs and ensure a price difference remained in place. HA asked for us to vote on the original proposal and PR seconded this proposal. ME believed the original should be voted upon first but JP felt that precedent dictated the revised should go first; ME said he was happy for the revised proposal to be voted upon first.

Revised proposal; Reduce DIM rates to CIM +£2;	Votes in favour: 6
Proposed: JP	Votes against: 11
Seconded: AB	Abstentions: 0
Original proposal; Match DIM rates to CIM;	Votes in favour: 16
Proposed: ME	Votes against: 2
Seconded: PR	Abstentions: 1

Action; DIM rates for 2020 to be revised to match CIM rates (£17); therefore, Couples DIM = £34.

6.3: Proposal by Howard Jones to change membership cost for non-UK resident BCA members

JW felt that some clarification will be needed of what the BCA considers a UK resident (**Action; HJ**)

Votes in favour: 19 (unanimous)

Action; Non-UK residents to pay the non-caver membership fee as the membership benefit of liability insurance is not valid for them.

Other membership fees for 2020:

LW reminded everyone that we had agreed to revisit associate membership fees to ensure there is no financial penalty for any clubs taking this on due to abolition of a former membership category that allowed them to be full members without public liability insurance.

The cheapest club membership rate is £25, so DC proposed changing associate club membership to match this (£25). This was seconded by TA; 18 votes in favour, none against and one abstention.

Action: Associate club membership rate for 2020 to be reduced to £25

No change to any other membership rates were discussed.

(7) Clarification on associate membership; Proposal by Matt Ewles

Due to the meeting being behind schedule this was kicked out to the January meeting with ME in agreement that it didn't require attention before then.

(8) Proposal by Howard Jones; Personal accident (PA) insurance

In earlier discussions the decision has been made to put adoption of personal accident insurance on-hold so this agenda item is no longer required.

(9) Proposal by Howard Jones; BCA surplus planning

HJ introduced this agenda item by saying he doesn't want the BCA to be making a surplus; he felt this showed a lack of imagination on how to use money. He said he is delighted to see a total of 11 proposals/suggestions now on the table for ways to spend our money.

HJ summarised his proposal which has been agreed by the Finance Committee.

JA felt she wouldn't want to see us using money to reduce membership fees; we should be more imaginative than this. AR felt that amending membership fees on a year-by-year basis depending on previous budget surplus would be confusing. DC later expressed concern that this would lead to unusual numbers and asked how they would be rounded. LW felt that small adjustments to the membership fee weren't needed.

MS said that he is a big fan of the Ghar Parau Foundation (GPF) but questioned what proportion of cavers benefit from it? PR said this was a good question and a difficult one to answer.

WB suggested that the proposal be amended to say 50% is given to a cause decided by Council; LW asked which 50% WB is referring to? JA clarified the suggestion as 50% of surplus going to GPF and the other 50% going to a cavers' cause of Council choosing. With respect to the GPF 50%, JA asked whether the money would just go into capital or whether it would be spent; HJ said that the BCA will clarify that this money is to be spent and not to disappear into a pot.

WB suggested just not mentioning GPF and leaving all the money to Council discretion of what cause to donate to. MS supported this and asked if we can amend the proposal point (2) to read that ***"if there is still a surplus in a year, then the following year we distribute the surplus to caving causes agreed by Council."*** (Proposed by TR, seconded by WB).

The proposals were voted upon.

(1) Re; fully funding all regional activities; This was accepted unanimously

(2) Amendment of proposal (2) to the above text; 17 votes in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions

(3) Acceptance of amended proposal; 18 votes in favour, none against, 1 abstention

Action: HJ to action any amendments to funding documents/rules considering this outcome.

(10) CNCC Conservation and Access funding proposal

WB asked how this proposal works with the previously accepted proposal to fully fund regional councils. TA said that just because all activities are now funded it doesn't mean proposals above the stated value shouldn't be reviewed.

RV asked whether this is a CNCC proposal or a C&A proposal? ME clarified that this originated as a CNCC proposal to the C&A, however, the C&A Committee had discussed and voted in favour of this and so it was now a C&A proposal to Council; ME apologised for the misleading heading to the agenda item that seemingly presented this as a direct CNCC proposal.

AB felt this was an attempt to gain control over individual region's access arrangements and said the CSCC will not be supporting this. AB said that TA was against the Mendips, something which TA refuted.

MS said he doesn't understand how this has such significant political implications. DC said that before the BCA was created, the idea was presented for BCA as a 'one-stop-shop' i.e. a central pool of money for caving projects, rather than cavers paying the individual regions. The money would be allocated automatically, i.e. if it was a core funded item, it would automatically be granted funding without question, with no route for the payment to be refused. DC felt that this new proposal is introducing the option for core C&A funding requests to be refused for things that previously would not have been paid automatically.

TA commented that this proposal came out of a fully constituted and well attended C&A meeting at which nobody (including the CSCC rep) voted against. DC said that the CSCC rep abstained, citing a need for further guidance from CSCC on this. Do we want to rerun the discussions now?

JP felt there has been a misunderstanding here and that the intention of the proposal is to allow regional councils to support each other on funding and not an attempt to control spending. AB disagreed, citing the 'scrutiny and approval' part of the proposal.

JP felt that the £750 limit was irrelevant as we have just agreed in the previous proposal to fully fund all regional council activity. LW commented that there seems to be a conflict here with the previous proposal (agenda item 9, proposal 1). AM asked HJ to explain the previous proposal, which has now been accepted.

HJ explained that the previous proposal ('to fully fund all regional activities') revolved around the fact that when regional treasurers submit their claims under the various BCA budget heads, there are sometimes specific activities which are disallowed, resulting sometimes in a small portion of the claim being disallowed; this was causing some regional councils to worry about future funding. HJ gave an example that in 2018, the CNCC spend about £600 on everything they did and submitted a claim for this, of which £32 was disallowed because they were not on the list of allowable activities. Given that these disallowed activities usually amount to tiny sums of money, yet they create work for regional treasurers and the Finance Committee and the BCA Treasurer, the previous proposal was intended to do away with disallowed activities so that all regional activities can be funded. Funding above a certain value needing approval was unchanged by that proposal.

CR questioned whether any reasonable proposal would actually be rejected under the proposed new rules? Surely this is about gathering information on what money is being spent on and not about refusing spending?

DC felt the issue was that these proposals were giving the C&A Committee the power to withhold funding from regional councils, whereas previously this power did not exist. MS said that surely this is no different to other committees (e.g. E&T) reviewing funding? DC commented that the E&T has, historically, been the only Committee able to refuse funding. NA couldn't see any reason why C&A funding would ever be refused. TA felt that the only change here is that the body reviewing C&A funding is changing from the Finance Committee to the C&A Committee.

The original proposal was seconded by MS.

PR summed up the concerns; he felt the CSCC are worried that their spending will be blocked if the C&A don't agree with it. AB added that they might find themselves going cap in hand to gate a cave whereas previously this kind of activity would have been funded automatically. JP added that the DCA are in the same boat as they are regularly capping mine shafts etc.

HA asked whether we can vote on this in the spirit of having faith in good working practice?

DC said he felt that the previous proposal 'to fully fund all regional activities' made this proposal redundant. AM suggested we needed to return to HJ's previous proposal now that we all have a better understanding of what this proposal was all about.

ME suggested that if a vote on this C&A proposal is to happen, those voting need to do so bearing in mind the clarification on what HJ's previous proposal meant; i.e. that it related to the removing of disallowed items from BCA funding rules and not funding all claims irrespective of their value, and that this proposal has been accepted.

A vote was taken on the C&A proposal as presented in the agenda;
Votes in favour: 14
Votes against: 2
Abstentions: 4

Action: Update any necessary documents with these changes to procedure.

(11) Amendment of April meeting dates

ME agreed that this agenda item can be moved out for consideration at the January meeting.

(12) Amendments to Manual of Operations (by Matt Ewles)

ME agreed that this agenda item can be moved out for consideration at the January meeting.

(13) Update and approval of funds for Radon monitoring

This has already been dealt with (and funds approved) under the Radon Working Group report.

(14) Agenda items received from Council of Southern Caving Clubs

With respect to the content of the Secretary's report, AB said he was happy that a constitutional issue has been acknowledged and is happy with ME's suggestion in his report. This was voted upon and received 18 votes in favour, none against and one abstention.

Action: ME to remove WB's 5th Individual Rep Council position and move him into the vacant second position (2019-2021). Contacts page to be updated accordingly.

With respect to point (2) (re; Charterhouse Caving Company), AB felt that the constitution had been used incorrectly by the Youth Development (YD) team. WB said that when the issue was first raised two years ago, Council decided that this was a national issue and hence decided to get a legal opinion on the matter. Hence, Council has already authorised acting on this matter.

AB clarified that CSCC are not speaking on behalf of the Charterhouse Caving Company.

ME commented that a formal complaint from the Charterhouse Caving Company against WB and RN had now been received and needs to be followed through the proper channels. ME expressed concern about discussing this further with Council until the proper channels had been followed.

WB said he wanted to keep well away from this, and asked PR if he might be willing to help mediate in this situation between BCA Council and the Charterhouse Caving Company. PR said he is happy to do this and wishes to help resolve the issues without infighting. PR proposed this and asked whether Council could mandate him to do this; no objections. ME emphasised that his remit must not be to persuade Charterhouse to drop the complaint; that is something they must decide to do of their own free will; instead, PR is to liaise with Charterhouse Caving Company and see if there is any way a satisfactory resolution can be found.

Action: PR to liaise with Charterhouse Caving Company on behalf of BCA Council; report back.

WB said that, following abuse and threats made to him, he wants nothing more to do with this.

With respect to CSCC point (3) and (4) ME asked AB if the CSCC are happy with his suggested ways forward from the Secretary report; AB confirmed yes.

Action: Action suggestions from Secretary report (via Manual of Operations).

HJ commented that if we accept both proposals (library and BCRA) this will leave us with a £21,000 predicted deficit for 2020. LW questioned whether this was affordable. HJ said if we want to accept this we have a few options (A) Approve a budget with a £21,000 deficit and accept both requests, (2) Approve an increase in membership costs of about £2pp to help cover this.

PR asked how many people use the library, commenting that this is lots of money if there are only a few users. JP emphasised that the amount of time needed is not necessarily proportional to the number of users; LW commented that the value of the library is equally as an archive.

JP said that BCRA does not own the library; it is a National Caving Library for all cavers; however, spending on the library has exceeded the money supplied from BCA, so BCRA had met the deficit in recent years.

TA clarified that BCRA have a bank balance of about £150,000.

JW explained that the BCRA funds are due to bequests, so there was no guaranteed regular income to replace this when it is gone. TA felt however that the BCA should not be putting so much money into the BCRA when BCRA have so much money of their own. JW added that the £150,000 is designated for projects and there is no way to replace this once gone.

PR agreed that BCA shouldn't be helping an organisation with so much money, but instead BCRA should come to the BCA when they get to a lower bank balance; suggesting that the BCA wouldn't see them get into financial trouble.

DC felt the BCRA needs to keep money for unforeseen eventualities.

After a continued discussion about whether BCA should fund BCRA's request, HJ proposed that the BCRA funding request should be shelved while BCA has relatively little understanding of BCRA's financial position; revisit this in January when a better understanding has been reached.

HJ felt he has no understanding of the three projects listed in the funding request and better understanding was needed before any decisions are reached.

AB felt that if we are going to do more with BCRA, we should review this more broadly. HJ agreed, that a last-minute request for such a large amount of money needs a much wider discussion. He felt BCRA could become the science wing of the BCA, which would also resolve the issues discussed earlier in the meeting regarding membership fees. JW commented that this would mean even more people would be able to benefit from BCRA funding (i.e. all BCA members).

Action: HJ and BCRA discuss options for future financing offline and come back to BCA Council with suggestions or proposals.

HJ said that we do understand the library much better and this is a simpler request so he seconded this request for funding and supported progressing this to a vote:

Additional funding for BCA Library (as per Appendix 2):
Votes in favour: 13
Votes against: 0
Abstentions: 4

Action: HJ to arrange additional funding for library and include in 2020 budget.

HJ explained that the result of the many and various decisions taken by Council in the meeting meant that Budget 2020 would show a planned deficit of £11,000. However, in the past deficits had been budgeted for, but as activities did not occur as planned, a deficit had not been seen in the following year. HJ will send ME a copy of the final budget for 2020 for publication.

Action HJ send final budget to ME; ME to publish as part of these minutes (appendix 3)

16.2. Use of UKCaving by BCA Officers

DC asked whether Council think the content of UK Caving recently is appropriate (with specific reference to some recent discussions in which DC is mentioned). JP felt that TA's post was not appropriate and was attacking of BCA Officers.

PR said this probably wasn't the right way to deal with the situation and referred to his email to Council, which called for a more grown up attitude where people want to move forward and listen to other people's arguments.

TA clarified that DC had reported the offending post to UK Caving moderators, who had discussed it objectively, emphasising that UK Caving is moderated by people who are unrelated to the BCA.

LW asked DC whether this discussion was a statement or a request for action? DC said that members of the public can say what they like but it is Council members attacking other Council members in a public forum has got to be condemned.

Meeting closed 16:45pm.

Future meeting dates up to and including next AGM (see website diary page):

Council meeting:

Saturday 11th January 2020 – Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall (DY10 4QA), 10:30am

Council meeting:

Saturday 4th April 2020 – Spanset, Middlewich (CW10 0HX), 10:30am

AGM and Council meeting:

Sunday 14th June 2020 – Priddy, Somerset, 10:30am

Council meeting:

Saturday 10th October 2020 – Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall (DY10 4QA), 10:30am

Council meeting:

Saturday 16th January 2021– Spanset, Middlewich (CW10 0HX), 10:30am

Actions from this meeting:

Responsibility	Action
ME	Investigate omitted changes to April minutes.
ME	Make corrections and issue June minutes as final.
CSCC (c/o AB)	Organise AGM weekend 2020 (14 th June); report to ME on details.
All	Check website content; either update or send GD amended content.
CB/ME	Grievance procedure and disciplinary policy to be reviewed (carried over)
DC	Implement soft opt-in for newsletter receipt.
DC	Explore commercial options for ballot emailing and if no success fallback to in-house systems to ensure the ballot is sent out no later than 31 st October.
DC	Provide the necessary accesses to GD (as outlined in ME's AGM proposal) immediately.
HJ/JPS	Continue to investigate instructor insurance; report back.
JA	Create poster to advertise expedition insurance.
IT Working Party	Discuss individual roles and report back to Council.
QMC	Proceed as planned with award in memory of Dave Elliot and Nigel Ball
GT	Continue with radon work and report back to Council on progress and when a discussion is needed about data usage.
PR/AE	Put UIS people in touch with JA for promotion of their efforts.
TA	Work with membership team to review wording regarding year of birth data collection as part of membership.
Membership team/GD	Amend membership rates according to this meeting outcome: DIMs to £17, Couples DIMs to £34 and Associate Club membership to £25, non-UK resident BCA member rate = non cavers rate.
HJ	Arrange some clarification wording on what constitutes a non-UK resident and email to GD for inclusion on website and membership team.
HJ	Action any necessary changes to funding documents/rules based on outcome of BCA surplus discussions and decisions.
HJ/C&A team	Action any necessary document changes associated to shift from C&A funding review from Finance Committee to C&A Committee.
ME/GD	Remove WB's 5 th Individual Rep position and move to the vacant second position (2019-2021).
PR	Liaise with Charterhouse Caving Company over complaint and report back.
ME	Action recommendations within Secretary report in Manual of Operations with respect to addressing CSCC concerns.

ME	Advertise the vacant (until 2020) Individual Representative position on Council for appointment on acting basis at start of January Council meeting (alongside C&A Officer if applicant in place).
HJ/BCRA	Discuss options for future BCRA financing and come back to BCA Council with suggestions or proposals.
HJ	Arrange funding for library and include in 2020 budget.
HJ	Send 2020 final budget to ME for inclusion in minutes (already done; see appendix 3; action does not need to be carried forward).

Appendix 1: Late report from Membership Administrator circulated on the day of the meeting

Number of BCA Members as of 10.10.19

CIMs = 5516

Groups = 176

DIMs 2019 = 792

DIMs 2020 = 13

Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club (USSCC)

All the Members of USSCC are currently BCA Members of Speleological Union of Ireland until 31st December 2019 and have filled in all the correct paperwork.

Statement from USSCC:

We exist for two main reasons: Firstly, to introduce the wider community to caving, and connect with community groups to spread the word and experience of our sport. Secondly, to build the membership of the club within Northern Ireland and make caving accessible to everyone, regardless of their background.

We also want to promote healthy and active lifestyles, as caving is not only fun but also hugely beneficial to both physical fitness and mental well-being. We are also an educational experience, teaching participants about geology and conservation, in addition to first aid, nutrition and many other associated skills.

Our project is open to everyone in Northern Ireland, and we consider ourselves to be a sports, educational and social club. There is a need within Northern Ireland for our club as we are the only caving club open to any member of the public. We hope to grow and substantially expand interest in our sport.

We seek to offer these opportunities to a wide variety of groups including local community groups, church groups, social groups as well as targeting specific demographics i.e. factory workers, emergency services etc... all in the hopes of introducing more people to caving whilst expanding our own club.

We are a non-profit organisation that seeks to expand interest in our sport and provide educational and social benefits to the community.

We wish to take novice members and help them become competent leaders through our learning syllabus. We offer the chance to expand skills, knowledge and awareness. We organise courses including advanced First Aid and Rescue and seek to make these available to the wider community by connecting with local community leaders.

An example of a recent club activity was for a group for people suffering from depression. We conducted a trip to a cave system near Marble Arch, with input from the group on which cave system to explore, based on their physical ability and the type of experience they desired. The group enjoyed this experience, and subsequently two of the participants joined the club as members, and we firmly hope they will participate further, and eventually utilise the skillsets they develop through this to volunteer in leading future groups on expeditions.

As a club, we believe in the importance of people having the opportunity to plan their own experiences with us. Expeditions provide a range of planning aspects which can be shaped by participants according to physical ability, existing skillset, and the skills which they hope to further. A perfect example of this is

which cave system to explore. There are a variety of caves suited to beginners which can each provide a different experience. Some involve bouldering or climbing, while others require less physical exertion while still providing breath-taking scenery and excellent geographical learning opportunities.

Participants seeking training will have a variety of options to choose from, based on existing skills and new skills they wish to develop, and our aim is for particular courses to be specifically shaped to participants depending on their needs.

Our ambition for the growth of our club is to be fuelled by group participants becoming members of our club. Members will be able to further their own abilities through both training and caving experience, with the aim of becoming qualified cave leaders who can lead expeditions for beginner groups. We feel that people in local communities have strengths which can be built upon to become excellent club members, not only for cave leading, but also for community outreach. Leadership and communication skills are vital for this role, and it is our belief that these are possessed by many people in the community.

We wish to expand our work in the community beyond expeditions and training courses. There are a range of events we would like to run in the community, and we would hope for substantial input from participants and new members in bringing forward ideas and assisting in their planning. We also believe that there are opportunities for cross-community events, which is of significant importance in Northern Ireland. Our aim would be for this not to simply be limited to existing cross-community groups, but for us to actively bring together people from different communities. We believe that participant and member input on this would be vital, and that through their contacts and communication skills, we can help to break down barriers between communities.

Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club

Appendix 2: Proposal for BCA Library Clerical Assistant funding circulated to BCA Council list too late for inclusion in meeting agenda.

APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO ENABLE THE BRITISH CAVING LIBRARY AT GLUTTON BRIDGE TO EMPLOY A CLERICAL ASSISTANT

Supporting documents:- Spreadsheet, **BCL Plan Finance 2018**

British Caving Library Report for BCRA AGM 2019 (up to end 2018)

1. Clerical Assistance Required

Following discussions between myself, the Librarian and the BCRA Chairman, we estimate that BCL requires **paid clerical assistance for a minimum of 12 person-hours per week** in order to manage the level of work now carried out. This does not require people with expertise in caving, rather it requires familiarity with basic IT and ability to work on cataloguing of books and journals using spreadsheet templates already developed. It could be a job-share with more than one person employed. The person(s) would need to liaise initially with the Librarian and Library Co-ordinator but we would hope that they would be able to continue without constant supervision.

2. The British Caving Library Business Plan and the personnel

The original British Caving Library Business Plan 2009-14 was written by two members of BCRA Council, both of whom have now resigned, and the (non-caving) Professional Librarian appointed by BCRA in 2008 to work two days per week, who resigned after two years in post. A part-time Senior Assistant Librarian (Mary Wilde, a caver with expertise in IT) was appointed by BCRA partway through 2009 to work 1 day per week; with the resignation of the Professional Librarian she has taken over the full duties of the Librarian but still works only one day per week. There is no other paid help and the Library otherwise relies entirely on volunteers, one of whom is BCRA Council Member Jenny Potts, who has taken on the post of Library Co-ordinator and reports to BCRA Council and to BCA.

3. The spreadsheet: BCL Plan Finance 2018

The original Business Plan was put to BCA in 2008; the spreadsheet was intended to indicate the approximate level of expenditure of the Library for the six years from 2009 to 2014; BCA awarded a grant of £10,000 p.a. beginning in 2009; following agreement by BCA in 2015 the grant has continued at the same level of £10,000 p.a. In July 2018 BCRA obtained a lease for an upstairs room to house the expanding collection of surveys and BCA agreed to fund this additional expenditure, effectively an additional £1,000 for 2018 and a total grant of £12,000 p.a. thereafter. Comparison between the original estimated expenditure and the actual expenditure indicates how this has worked out in practice.

4. Development of the Library and its effect on the level of work undertaken

The document British Caving Report for BCRA AGM 2019 sets out in detail, up to the end of 2018, how the Library has developed from its beginnings and highlights the problems of relying on volunteers. The amount of expert input required from the Librarian and the BCRA Library Co-ordinator has risen sharply:

- a. Increasingly donations to the Library include important archive material which needs to be sorted carefully; this is particularly true of visitors who bring family caving memorabilia and publications and expect to discuss these items in detail;
- b. Incoming enquiries increasingly rely on the expertise of the Librarian and BCRA Library Co-ordinator to research information, including the use of archive material;
- c. Visitors often arrive with the expectation of expert help with their research.

This requirement for expertise reduces the time the Librarian and Library Co-ordinator have to deal with the basic task of cataloguing incoming items as well as continuing to catch up with the mass of uncatalogued material inherited from the former BCRA Librarian, who died in 2007.

5. Volunteer Input

There is still a place for expert volunteer input to help with the various Library functions related to the website: the online bibliography/catalogue, the BCRA Archives and the Audio Archive. All these functions are carried out by cavers living in other areas and communicating with the Library by email; they form the members of the Library Steering Group.

We have had help from, usually local, caver volunteers to carry out particular tasks in which they have an interest, but this tends to be short term and once the task is completed, they leave. Currently we have just two volunteers cataloguing the John Beck surveys, a task which it is estimated will take at least two years to complete.

The Library Co-ordinator, who is herself a volunteer, puts in many hours in the Library - sometimes as much as 4 days per week - on cataloguing, dealing with archive material, answering enquiries, liaising with some donors of archive material and liaising with other caving club librarians. However, realistically, this cannot be relied upon to continue indefinitely nor might a future BCRA Library Co-ordinator be able to commit to this.

Jenny Potts, BCRA Library Co-ordinator, 4-10-19

	2016 Actual £	2017 Actual £	2018 Actual £	3 year average £	Adjustment	2020 Budget £	Note								
Regional Caving Councils	3,252	3,364	2,682	3,099		3,099									
British Caving Library	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	2,000 7,000	12,000 7,000	Increased to £12k in 2019 more admin provision								
BCRA						-	3 projects for 4 years								
Expedition Programme	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	2,000	7,000	Increase to £7k from £6k 2019								
International	0	216	339	185		185									
Radon work	0				3,000	3,000	Continued Radon project								
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	107,550	110,476	105,110	107,712	23,000	130,712									
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	10,805	20,280	19,097	16,727		- 10,273	deficit								
TAX	0	0	-	-		-									
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR AFTER TAX	10,805	20,280	19,097	16,727		- 10,273									
Net assets at year end	224,434	235,239	254,336												
History	14 year average 117,137	2018 124,207	2017 130,756	2016 118,355	2015 125,163	2014 130,825	2013 126,661	2012 117,819	2011 114,909	2010 113,938	2009 121,479	2008 101,272	2007 97,289	2006 108,082	2005 109,168
Income	102,475	105,110	110,476	107,550	105,682	123,228	121,409	110,414	106,604	88,684	84,164	87,238	91,023	91,494	101,571
expenditure	14,663	19,097	20,280	10,805	19,481	7,597	5,252	7,405	8,305	25,254	37,315	14,034	6,266	16,588	7,597
surplus															
net assets at year end	254,336	235,239	224,434	197,356	204,953	197,356	192,104	184,699	176,394	151,140	113,825	99,791	93,525	76,937	61,743

Appendix 4: CDG Statement on Personal Accident insurance

Secretary note; the CDG asked for this to be presented to the meeting; however, this was not needed as the Personal Accident insurance was put on hold and not discussed. The statement was not presented at the meeting but is included below for the records.

“The CDG would like to thank Howard Jones for his sterling work in managing the BCA insurance program and agree that reducing the surplus would be good for the caving community, however the CDG strongly objects to the proposal to introduce Personal Accident insurance. It is likely to lead to a large increase in costs for individual cavers and an increase in litigation. The proposal contains the benefit on death of £50k. In the last 20 years we have seen 17 caving deaths with an average of 0.85 deaths per year. On average, the Personal Accident scheme would have to pay out £42.5k for death benefits, plus the costs for injuries and the profit margin of the insurers. The total pay outs in a given year could easily be over £100k. Currently the premium is £18,433 which is clearly insufficient to meet the pay outs. The insurer will have to find ways of recovering the difference. Initially this is most likely to be through litigation of third parties i.e. individuals, caving clubs, landowners, rescue teams and instructors. This litigation will further add to the costs and also push up Public Liability insurance costs. The BCA premiums will have to rise considerably to cover the costs. Once a litigious environment has been established, large organisations supporting caving (e.g. schools, scouts...etc) will drive uptake of Personal Accident insurance and at rates of cover that are similar to more mainstream Personal Accident products, putting an upward pressure on the £50k death benefit and certainly making the alternative proposal of £15k death benefit obsolete. The cost to individual cavers will become large and mandatory. The current pool of around 6,000 members is too small for risk sharing such a large and predictable risk and individuals would be better off finding Personal Accident insurance through educational, travel, workplace or property based schemes where the shared risk is lower and the pool of members is much bigger. Such products are available for other adventure sports with costs typically around £200 per person per year and if the BCA adopts Personal Accident insurance then the long-term costs will probably be similar. Costs at this level would stifle caving, particularly opportunities for new entrants. The CDG rejects the proposal to introduce personal accident insurance at this time.”

Best wishes,

David Brock
Secretary, Cave Diving Group