

# BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION



The meeting of the BCA National Council was held  
10:30 am on Saturday 14 January 2006 at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch

## **Present –**

Mick Day (MD)	BCA Chairman
Jonathan Roberts (JR)	BCA Treasurer
Paula Grgich-Warke (PGW)	BCA Honorary Secretary
Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
Idris Williams (ID)	BCA Training Officer
David Judson (DJ)	Liability & Insurance Officer/BCRA Representative
Sue Mabbett (SM)	Cambrian Caving Council Representative
Jenny Potts (JP)	Derbyshire Caving Association Representative
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Representative
David Cooke (DC)	Club Representative, Wessex Caving Club
Emma Porter (EP)	Individual Member Representative
Pete Allwright (PA)	British Cave Rescue Representative
Les Williams (LW)	Publications and Information Officer
Chris Jewell (CJ)	Club Member

**Apologies** – David Jean, Clark Friend, Owen Clark, Bob Mehew, Andy Pryke, Jim Cochran, Patrick Hall, Chris Broome, Glen Jones

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME & ADDRESS (10:55 am)
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – See sheet
3. APPLICATIONS FOR CLUB MEMBERSHIP – There were no applications
4. MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING OF 15 OCTOBER 2005 – An amendment to section 20.4 was added to quote the new guidelines in and in section 3.2 to add "of the BCA Constitution". Notes were made to this effect by the Chairman. The minutes were accepted as amended.
5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING OF 15 OCTOBER 2005  
There were no matters arising.

## **OFFICERS REPORTS**

6. CHAIRMAN –  
UK Sport/Sport England Funding – UK Sport is attempting to streamline their organisation in an effort to save approximately £300,000.00. We are amongst a long list of groups whose funding has been dramatically cut. Reduced funding means that we must carefully consider future activities and development that could best utilise any available funds. Funding remains for 2006, however we must focus on training as mandatory to support. This leaves out the support for expedition caving. Funds are still available to cover the publication of Speleology. Several officers expressed concern that they had not received clarification of their budgetary constraints. Action: MD will contact Sport England to ensure that we are utilising current funds appropriately. MD asked that a list of expenditures be forwarded to BCA by each officer for consideration. Remaining financial issues will be discussed in Treasurer's report.
7. SECRETARY –
  - a. AGM agenda must be published by 11 February 2006. It will be posted on web for distribution and printed copies can be provided upon request.
  - b. Communication needs to be facilitated between Speleology editor, newsletter editor and secretary to ensure that appropriate BCA diary information is being adequately publicised.
  - c. No nominations or proposals have been received for the AGM. Forms were distributed to encourage nominations.
8. TREASURER
  - a. Current financial status. Bob Mehew provided an estimated figure in January, to be confirmed via accounting and auditing. The insurance scheme has proven to be successful and has raised sufficient funds to keep the scheme self-supporting. We can now begin looking at a long term budget and financial planning that does not

# BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION



necessarily include external funding sources (Sport England, UK Sport, etc). Sufficient surplus exists from last year to support expeditions, training, etc.

**MOTION: A motion was made by LW to provide GPF with appropriate funding to support expedition awards. 2<sup>nd</sup> by SM. The motion passed with two abstentions. A cheque in the amount of £2500.00 was presented to GPF to support expedition grants.**

- b. Budget issues – NW and JR are establishing a draft budget which will address organizational needs as well as outline regional support. Guidelines need to be established on how funds are directed back to the regional councils (based on expenditure, request, budgeting, etc.). DCUC did not make a financial requisition for the 2005 financial year. This needs to be addressed to prevent this problem again in the future.
- c. An audit process for 2005 must be established before 2006 expenditures are reimbursed. Both JP and DC requested a step-by-step system with principles and guidelines appropriate to all regions to ensure impartial awards. ACTION – JR is to provide a copy of this documentation to be circulated with minutes, at AGM and on web page.

The meeting with regional council treasurers has not yet occurred, but JR has requested of each region that this meeting should occur at the beginning of the new financial year. ACTION - JR is to schedule this meeting and draft a set of guidelines and procedures for budgeting and auditing by regional councils to be discussed at that time.

- d. DC has again requested that all regional accounts be made open and transparent. JR will address this at the regional treasurers meeting
  - e. No tax due to Inland Revenue
  - f. The NCA expenditure policy has been formally adopted by BCA.
  - g. A request by Bob Mehew was made via email to obtain £2500.00 for anchor testing equipment and the purchase of new fittings. Approval was granted by MD and PGW in December.
9. CONSERVATION OFFICER
- a. A report of contaminated water in Manor Farm Swallet has raised concerns. This was unfortunately based on a 2003 report. The status of access during low flow and summer seasons remains unchanged and will continue to be managed at a regional level.
  - b. An extension to the CROW act has been proposed to include coastal access. EL has recommended that cavers notify representatives that caving is not included as a specific activity within the legislation, although it is expressly mentioned in the Scottish legislation. EL also recommended that we contact the BMC as they are explicitly mentioned in the legislation.
10. TRAINING OFFICER
- a. The CIC handbook is currently at printers and due out soon. It was paid out of 2004 budget so no further expenditure will be required.
  - b. There is a need for new CIC trainers and assessors following death of Dave Edwards and the resignation of an assessor due to the cost of insurance. As insurance still continues to be an issue for CICs, possible inclusion in the BCA insurance scheme is being.
  - c. CIC Revalidation Process – a discussion regarding recent criticism of the revalidation process including cost, frequency, intensity, availability, etc. was opened. Consideration was given to altering the award scheme to separate leadership and instruction from skills. The current scheme focuses on professional caving instruction as opposed to recreational caving. Concern was expressed that University clubs might be required to hold an award to ensure liability coverage through their respective institutions. A syllabus or recommended good practice guidelines for clubs was recommended as opposed to a different certification scheme.
  - d. Finances of training in the future – Due to financial restrictions, the current scheme would realise a significant shortfall if it became fully self-funded. It was noted that an increase of approximately 50% would cover this shortfall. There is an additional need to identify a technical advisor as IW has been providing this service at no charge since the death of Dave Edwards.

**MOTION: A motion was made to allocate funds in the amount of £2000.00 per year for a period of two years in order to create and distribute recommended datasheets by CJ. 2<sup>nd</sup> by SH. Passed Unanimously.**

# BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION



**MOTION: A motion was made to allow the training committee to set training fees was made by SH. 2<sup>nd</sup> by LW. Passed unanimously.**

11. EQUIPMENT OFFICER – A report was sent via email by AP. SM expressed concerns that at the moment there are no qualified individuals available to inspect bolts in Wales. LW suggested extending the revalidation for Ecobolt inspection to an interval of 3-5 years. Additional concern was expressed that there is only one person at the moment qualified to train trainers. Consideration should be given to an annual meeting between BCA, BMC and industry representatives to ensure that we are meeting appropriate standards for bolt installation and inspection. **ACTION:** PGW to write to AP requesting he attends the next council meeting so that appropriate decisions can be made with his input.
12. EDITOR- The editor is currently out of the country – no report received
13. PUBLICATIONS & INFORMATION OFFICER
  - a. SO YOU WANT TO GO CAVING – A final draft was presented for review and approval. JP will arrange for printing of brochures with insert page of information that may require periodic updates to keep costs down and reduce the need for future reprints.

**MOTION: A motion was made to print 5000 units at a cost of £275.00 by LW and 2<sup>nd</sup> by PGW. Passed unanimously.**

- b. Other publications - Legal & Insurance booklet has been printed and is available for purchase. The Radon booklet is currently being updated.
- c. Web updates – LW would like to include publications on website for download. This will be discussed at a meeting with Speleology Editor and BCA newsletter editor. Action: LW to convene meeting and report back to BCA Council. LW has asked that all officers actively populate their area on web site, and has suggested that BCA adopt a policy for information available on the BCA website. Information on membership structure, organisation functions, and the member's handbook will all be added. Action: DJ to send digital info to LW for inclusion on web page.
- d. Adoption of NCA policies as BCA policies – A number of NCA policies (child protection, equity, etc.) were adopted by BCA on principle, but not formally accepted. In order for these policies to be placed on BCA web page, they must be fully adopted by BCA.

**Motion: A motion was made by DJ that all former NCA policies that were set out in the first BCA annual handbook should now be formally adopted by BCA. 2<sup>nd</sup> LW. Passed Unanimously.**

- e. Publication delivery delays – Ongoing difficulties have been addressed with the newsletter editor, including problems with last publication and distribution. This will be discussed at the proposed meeting noted in section 13-a.
14. LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER – Updated version of legal and insurance handbook has now been printed at a cost of only £80.00 with advertisement used to offset the cost. Fifty (50) copies went to Pat Ramsden for distribution associated with the training scheme. The remainder went to Ernie Shield for sales and distribution. DJ has asked to retain some copies in order to make them available at the upcoming BCRA Science Symposium on 4 March 2006.
15. INSURANCE MANAGER – A report was provided by NW that included an update on slight changes to the insurance policy that benefit. NW made the following proposals:
  - a) The PL insurance contributions for BCA caving and non-caving members for 2006 should be £15.00 and £5.00 respectively.
  - b) That Cave Diving Group members should be treated no differently to any other scheme members.
  - c) That the contribution from access controlling bodies and from clubs with huts or responsibility for an access agreement should be £50.00
  - d) That the contribution from full time students should be £8.00
  - e) That the explosives user contribution of £50.00 be scrapped and that explosives users be treated the same as other scheme members.

**MOTION: A single motion by JR, 2<sup>nd</sup> by JP, was made to accept all of the above proposals. Passed unanimously.**

**The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8RG**

# BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION



16. CONVENOR, RADON WORKING PARTY – No report received.
17. NATIONAL CAVE REGISTRY CO-ORDINATOR – the bulletin board is now posted and accessible to all. Hidden forums have been included for private discussion areas accessible by officers only. WEBMASTER
  - a. Updates to web page – see publications information under item 13.
  - b. Discussion Board/Forum addition by DC – see cave registry information under item 17. Efforts continue to provide the membership database on the server for regional council and officer access only. It is hoped that the training database can be accessed similarly in the future.
18. INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE – No report received

## OTHER

### 19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Membership Renewals for 2006. Total renewals are not available yet, however LB will provide this information soon.
- b. BCRC representative Pete Allwright distributed a statement of association of BCRC to BCA. Cave rescue teams operate on a volunteer basis and do not make decisions regarding national policy. BCRC have asked that BCA act as the national body in circumstances involving press and publicity. NW notes that BCA should have a protocol in order to address enquiries from the press in the future. BM has had some training in this and has offered to draft. It was recommended that a tape and/or briefing statement be developed and made available by request or as a download on BCA web page. **Action:** PGW to contact BM and ask him to pursue.
- c. Club and Region needs for membership lists. The membership database is often requested by clubs and regional bodies in order to ensure membership continuity. LB continues to update these records as renewals are obtained. DC continues to work on the web interface for this database which will be on line in the near future.
- d. Manual of operations. There is currently no manual of operations, however we are required to maintain one. LW suggested that each officer should review the draft NCA manual and assess for revisions. **Action:** MD to email manual to board for review and updating.
- e. DCA insurance scheme has not been renewed. Those currently participating are covered until 31 January. DCA is informing by letter and web notice to move members over to the BCA policy. This will be updated in the future.
- f. Mileage rate review. JR noted that mileage rate has not been reviewed for several years and is well below current market rate.

**MOTION: A motion was made to change mileage reimbursement rate to 20 ppm effective 1/1/2006 by JR, 2<sup>nd</sup> JP. Passed unanimously.**

- g. Allocation of finances for marketing and recruitment including updating posters, brochures, publications with prominent displays in outdoor shops, show caves, outdoor show representation. DC suggested individual club interests must be considered in any scheme to ensure they are receptive to the idea. It was recommended to contact the BMC for their ideas and advice on recruitment and promotion. **ACTION:** CJ and NW will develop ideas and approach retailers for sponsorship.

**MOTION: A motion was made to allocate £2000 for these efforts by JR, 2<sup>nd</sup> LW. Passed unanimously.**

### 20. DATE, TIME & PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the BCA AGM on 25 March 2006 at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch at 10:30 am with the Council meeting to follow.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 pm.