

# BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION



The meeting of the BCA National Council was held  
10:30 am on Saturday 13 October 2007 at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch

## Present –

Mick Day (MD)	BCA Chairman
Dave Cooke (DC)	BCA Treasurer
Simon Froude (SF)	BCA Honorary Secretary
Andy Pryke (AP)	BCA Equipment Officer
Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Cons. & Access Officer
David Judson (DJu)	Legal & Insurance Officer/BCRA Representative
Sue Mabbett (SM)	Cambrian Caving Council Representative
Glenn Jones (GJ)	Council of Northern Caving Clubs Representative
Steve King (SK)	Council of Southern Caving Clubs Representative / Individual Member Rep.
Jenny Potts (JP)	Derbyshire Caving Association Representative
Dave Jean (DJe)	Devon & Cornwall Representative
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	Ass. Caving Instructors Representative
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Representative
Chris Jewell (CJ)	BCA Youth & Development Officer / CHECC Rep.
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Representative, Orpheus Caving Club
Emma Porter (EP)	Individual Member Representative
Charles Milton (CM)	Individual Member Representative
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Annual Handbook Editor / Individual Member Representative

- Chairman's Welcome:** MD welcomed members to this Council Meeting. JP agreed to act as recorder pending arrival of Secretary
- Apologies for Absence:** Received from: Graham Mollard (Training Officer), Les Williams (Publications & Information Officer), Alan Finch, Idris Williams, Bernie Woodley, Bob Mehew.
- Applications for Club Membership:**
  - Putative Council of Scout Caving teams/clubs: Idris Williams had reported that there were discussions in hand aimed at setting up a body, probably upon similar lines to CHECC, to allow liaison between Scout caving groups and to provide advice for them. The feeling of the meeting was that, while it felt such a body would be useful, this should not preclude individual Scout Caving groups from joining BCA since they expected to benefit from the work on training and access which was funded by BCA. It was agreed to accept the Scout body in principle, noting that further work needed to be done in setting it up.
  - Youth Adventure Thameside: G.Jones reported that he had received an application for Club Membership of BCA, accompanied by a suitable Constitution, from Youth Adventure Thameside.  
**Agreed to accept them as members.**
- Minutes of Last Council Meeting (9 June 2007)** – Item 2 should read Karen Slatcher. Item 21g replace “volunteers” with “monitored staff”. Notes were made to this effect by the Chairman. Minutes then accepted as a true record

## OFFICERS REPORTS

- Chairman** (Written report tabled)
  - MD reported on the recent meeting of CCPR he had attended. Noted that much of the funding available for sport required an amount of “hoop jumping”, which caving had found in the past required onerous and unrealistic targets in the hope of receiving minimal return.
  - A new scheme: an interactive TV game called “BingoLotto”, operated by IGS, was being suggested, which had proved successful in raising money for sport in Sweden. It appeared BCA might be eligible to obtain funding for training Cave Leaders from the new scheme, although it was felt we should approach this with caution and count any income generated from this as a bonus. **It was agreed formally that BCA should participate in BingoLotto.** Suggested that this should be dealt with by MD and DC.

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## 6. Treasurer (Draft Budget for 2008 tabled.)

- a. DC reported that the new Standard Life account had been set up. The new bank mandates had been set up so that he could now operate the BCA accounts himself and sign cheques - the exception being the Training Account. He hoped shortly to be able to set up a suitable internet banking system for BCA.
- b. DC has identified a suitable person to act as Auditor for BCA's accounts: Jane Whittaker, who is based in S.W. England. Likely to be a charge of around £300 for her services.
- c. In response to a query, DC confirmed that travel expenses are paid to all BCA Officers and Council Members attending Council Meetings but not for their attendance at the AGM.
- d. DC set out current financial position. There are still salaries to be paid this year which will account for a large proportion of current surplus. Payments to Regional Councils were "Immanent". We were likely to end the year close to breakeven, this is despite losing the grant from Sports Council (~£11k) however, insurance premium was less than expected by about £10k
- e. DC introduced his draft accounts for 2008 and went through them in detail.
  - i. It was noted that there is a suitable reserve in the accounts to enable BCA to fund insurance excess in the event of two claims, and this reserve must be maintained.
  - ii. It was noted that, if all subscriptions, insurance payments, etc. were maintained at the current rate for next year, there was a likelihood of a deficit of about £7k. It seemed likely that the cost of BCA's insurance next year would be similar to this year. After discussion it was agreed unanimously that, subject to there being no large increase in the cost of BCA's Public Liability Insurance, next year's BCA Membership rates would be:  
CIM and DIM caver - raise insurance contribution by £1 to £16.  
CIM and DIM non-caver - insurance contribution to remain at £5.  
CIM student caver and U18 caver - insurance contribution to remain at £8.  
DIM caver/non-caver - all other subscription elements to remain the same, giving overall rise of £1.  
JOINT DIMs - caver(s) member(s) rate will rise by £1, all other subscription elements to remain the same.  
Noted that the additional charge for BCRA membership, which is added to DIM membership, will be set by BCRA. This increase in subs would result in a predicted end of year deficit of £2.4k but there is the possibility that not all budgeted monies will be spent.
  - iii The pro-rata nature of joining BCA part way through the year needs to be highlighted to Clubs. DIM's are currently being subsidised by other membership classes. There are currently around 100 ~ 200 BCRA members who could be brought into BCA.
  - iv DC to send GJ details of new subscription rates (within 7 days). DC may wish to round up pro-rata rates.  
Details of new rates to be posted on BCA website

## 7. Secretary

- a. BCA AGM will be held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2008. It would be useful to have advanced warning of any proposals that Council members wish to make for discussion at next Council meeting. The posts of Treasurer, Equipment Officer and Publications & Information Officer are due for election at the AGM as these have come to the end of their 3 year tenure. Similarly, two Club Reps and two Individual Reps are also up for election having reached the end of their two year spell. It would be useful to know if any other Council Officers are considering standing down at the AGM. Basic notification of the AGM will go to members in the Dec newsletter. All items for discussion and nominations must be received by Secretary by 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb so that a full agenda can be circulated to members before 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. This will require a separate mailing.

## 8. Conservation Officer

- a. Thanks to GJ for sending list of members. EL apologised for delay in publication of conservation codes..
- b. A response has gone to DEFRA on "Access to Coasts" - whilst supporting wider access NAHMO have expressed concerns that increased public access will require mineshafts, etc. to be made safer which may result in them being damaged in the process. It was mentioned that the reduced liability of landowners through CRoW doesn't apply to man-made structures and that the Mines and Quarries Regs. may also impact on artifacts around the coast.
- c. A local request has been received for a list of cave sites for a National database for resources for recreation. When information of this type has been released into the public domain in the past there have been problems with vandalism of sites plus an increase in rescue incidents. Other areas need to be aware of the implications of releasing this type of information. Advice was given with the list that it was not appropriate for public consumption. CSCC have taken the view that access information needs to accompany any such details of site locations.

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- d. EL expressed concern that the publication “Navigating Deep Water in Porth yr Ogof” had been produced by the Training Committee without apparent consultation with the landowner. EL also added that the systems set up to manage local consultation seemed to have been bypassed in this case and that it was important that local people are consulted before such publications are produced. MD explained that an unusual set of events had led to this situation in that the review that GM had been involved with was an Army review which had taken place in England. Had it been a normal inquest then it would have been conducted in Wales and the usual routes of consultation would have been followed. It was mentioned that this was a draft report approved by the Training Committee and NCP and they were not trying to affect the way most cavers use Porth yr Ogof. The problem was with led groups whose leaders were not aware of the hazards that that particular cave presents. MD added that it was right that Training Committee should give advice on such situations and they had brought it to BCA Council to say that this was primarily a CCC matter. The final document, produced by Training Committee in conjunction with CCC should be promulgated through CCC and with the co-operation of the land owner. EL will speak with GM about this and also push to get the full number of fatalities included.
9. **Training Officer** (No representatives from Training Committee present)
- a. CCC require details of Cave Leaders and CIC holders in Wales to gain money and support from “Sports Clubs for Wales”. CCC to request information from Karen Slatcher. If there are technical problems with this then DC will help.
10. **Equipment Officer**
- a. AP gave a detailed presentation on work carried out as a result of a recent anchor failure on Mendip. Summary of work to be produced by AP in due course.
- b. Consultation document on anchor placement. AP agreed in sentiment with the concerns raised by CSCC at the last meeting under item 11 d. and pointed out that this was a discussion document. Clarification was sought as to why the CSCC rep on the Equipment Committee hadn’t raised these concerns within that committee.
11. **Editor** not present, no report.
12. **Publications & Information Officer** not present, no report. “Hidden Earth” report tabled under this item by JP
13. **Legal & Insurance Officer**
- a. A small number of new insurance brokers have shown an interest in the BCA insurance scheme. DJ will be meeting with NW in the near future to discuss.
- b. CSCC would like to see specific guidelines on admitting under 18 year olds to caving clubs issued by BCA. The current guidelines are one interpretation of the law. Other NGB’s, e.g. RYA, have policy documents as this is common to a whole range of activities. The problem of protecting adults from false accusations was identified. One solution would be to produce a range of documents including FAQ sheets, scenarios, discussion documents and notes on practical implementation. DW to review current documents and discuss with DJ
- c. Question asked as to whether University Guidelines are being revised by CHECC. Feedback suggests that current guidelines are good and should not be changed. CJ reported that additional documentation to help with interpretation of current guidelines had been produced but there were no plans to revise the actual guidelines.

## OTHER REPORTS

14. **Membership Secretary**
- a. Report circulated. Blank cards for 2008 to be ordered shortly.
- b. Problem raised that some individuals joining BCA part way through year were not receiving membership cards (esp. Hades members). GJ to investigate.
15. **Insurance Manager** not present, no report
- a. No problems foreseen with travel insurance.
16. **Convenor, Radon Working Party** report tabled
- a. LW reported that he was keen to get the Radon Booklet published. The latest draft is with BM. LW to pursue.
17. **National Cave Registry Co-Ordinator** no report.
18. **International Representative**
- a. European Speleo Congress 2008. BCA has opportunity to bulk buy tickets at a reduced price and on a sale or return basis. Tickets to be sold at £25 for full ticket and £15 for a spouse/u18 ticket which is slightly below cost price. 10 spouse & 40 full tickets to be purchased. DC to discuss flexibility on ticket types with organisers. Ticket to be sold through GJ who will also put together some publicity events.

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## 19. Youth & Development Officer

- a. Association of Scout Caving. Further to the discussion which took place earlier in the meeting the possibility of a "Council of Scout Caving Teams" being set up within BCA was discussed. This was suggested as a platform to share resources and organize events within the Scouting movement. The meeting supported, in principle, the setting up of such a Council and wanted more information about how this could be achieved. It was noted that web space could also be provided by BCA.
- b. Try Caving flyers. Cost of producing more included in budget. A wider distribution may be more efficient.
- c. Website up and running with e-mail shots going out from it. The more links to Club websites that we can get on it the better but need to check that all Clubs posting on it are BCA members. Also need to look at putting dates of commercial courses run by CIC holders onto calendar so that novices have option of going with commercial instructors. CIC to have as item on AGM agenda and look at linking into Training Committee.
- d. Outdoor show has contacted CJ and are really keen to have us back so we may be able to negotiate a good deal with them. If we decide to go with it we will need a small budget (not to exceed £1k) to cover items such as T-shirts. Could also consider buying / producing our own "show" cave and other items such as marquee.
- e. Try Caving weekend 2008. Aim to hold over non-bank holiday weekend perhaps mid to end June and publicise better.

## 20. Any Other Business

- a. GPF had a meeting at Hidden Earth and has had four applications for grants. Awards totalling £1.5K were made.
- b. Handbook. Report tabled. Note could go into newsletter asking if any details need updating.

## 21. Date of next meeting

The next Council meeting will be on 5th January 2008 at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch at 10:30 am.

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