



**Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 6th October 2012
at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch**

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE)	BCA Chairman
Paul Ibberson (PI)	BCA Treasurer
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor
Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer / Webmaster / 2016
Jenny Potts (JP)	BCA Publication Sales / DCA Rep.
David Cooke (DC)	BCA Cave-Registry / IT Working Group / Individual Member Rep.
Helen Brooke (HB)	BCA Youth & Development / CHECC Rep.
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Member Rep.
Bernie Woodley (BW)	Club Member Rep.
Mick Day (MD)	Individual Member Rep.
David Checkley (DCh)	BCRA Chairman
Mark Williams (MW)	CSCC Rep.
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Rep.

The meeting commenced at 10:40am.

1. Chairman's Welcome

AE welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Faye Litherland, Idris Williams, Owen Clarke, Clark Friend, Steve Holding, Emma Porter, Alan Finch, Ged Champion, Bob Mehew, Glenn Jones, Nigel Ball, Nick Williams and Mike McCombe.

3. Applications for Club Membership

The following clubs have provided the correct paperwork and payment to become BCA Member Clubs: Carleton Caving Club, Galway Geological Association and Over and Under CC.

Proposal: *to accept the Carleton Caving Club, the Galway Geological Association and the Over and Under Caving Club as Member Clubs.*

Prop: DW, Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 9th June 2012 (previously circulated)

DJu: Arthur Champion left before the start of the Council Meeting, so needs removing from the attendance list.

Proposal: *to accept the Minutes from 9th June 2012 as a true record*

Prop: JP, Sec: HB *agreed unanimously*

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last Council Meeting

Review of Action Log

Action Log 6 (*Bank Mandates*): Complete

Action Log 36 (*Manual of Operations*): Ongoing

Action Log 54 (*Liaise with SUI*): Ongoing.

Action Log 83 (*Produce Asset Register*): Ongoing

Action Log 84 (*Speleology Funding*): PI – David Gibson is in the process of rewriting the software and this should solve the issue. AE – there are 2 candidates for the post of UK-based editor and AE now needs to talk to Erin Lynch, which he will be able to do shortly. HB – Erin does not receive a paper copy of Speleology. Is it possible to include her in the lists? AE – will take her past copies when he visits in a few weeks.

Action 108: DW to liaise with David Gibson re: Erin being added to the Speleology distribution list. [Post-Meeting note:

Erin is already on the list. Her copy is posted by David Gibson to the Chinese address she has provided].

Action Log 93 (*in May GJ to send letter to non-joiners*): See Membership Administrator's Report

Action Log 95 (*Student Member Discount*): see Treasurer's Report

Action Log 97 (*T/As working as Individuals*): Ongoing

Action Log 102 (*BCA Award Holders' BCA Membership*): Ongoing

Action Log 103 (*Proposal for 2016 Working Party*): see 2016 Report

Action Log 104 (*Potential CP Officer*): Ongoing

Action Log 105 (*Review of CP Guidance*): see L&I Report

Action Log 106 (*Potential Newsletter Editor*): HB: may have found someone suitable and will now ask them to liaise with LW.

Action Log 107 (*Distribute Advice Notes on Public Rights of Way*): Complete

Officers' Reports

6. Chairman (*written report previously circulated*)

First of all I should like to thank many Council Members for the hard work over the last few months and indeed I should like to extend those thanks to a number of regional officers who have done good work on regional matters, particularly access.

There is however, an on-going problem within British caving that is resulting in an enormous amount of wasted time. I still believe, as mentioned several times in my meeting reports that we are here to improve British caving. We are not here to reminisce about the past, bickering between ourselves and scoring points between people and regions. Is any of this constructively or efficiently working towards improving British caving?

I continually hear people talking disparagingly between groups and regions and demanding apologies and boycotting meetings. Surely this cannot be constructive in working towards improving British caving.

Everybody agrees that British caving needs the best possible anchors in the best possible locations and that the people installing them must be able to protect themselves while doing so. At the moment some are not willing to consider that an installer can do this without being "SRT competent" and that to alter this phrase would be to somehow lessen the quality of the anchors installed.

Actually I would argue anyone installing anchors for SRT should be "expert", rather than "competent" at SRT. Equally someone installing anchors for ladder & lifeline must be expert at modern ladder & lifeline techniques, including the use of traverse lines, harnesses and cowstails. At the same time someone installing an anchor for a handline in a constricted passage may require nothing more to protect them than a comfortable pair of knee pads! To suggest that all installers must be able to prusik, abseil, pass knots and do changeovers to be safe while installing a bolt at a pitch head is simply wrong.

In my view the wording could be usefully changed to: "The installer must be able to protect themselves while installing the anchor and be suitably skilled in choosing the best location for the anchor." If words similar to this could be accepted by everybody, the permanent resin bonded anchors procedure could be applied across the whole of Britain.

Andy Eavis

AE: Apologies to LW for not mentioning and thanking the Hidden Earth team for another excellent event.

LW: There is a large team involved in the background and they do a fantastic job. It is great that lots of people are willing to offer help.

The remainder of the Chairman's Report was accepted without discussion.

7. Secretary (*written report previously circulated*)

A lot of my work since the AGM has been in my Executive capacity, rather than Secretary. The actions resulting from this are reported under the appropriate Standing Committees below.

Apart from this I have nothing to report, other than a reminder that I have moved house and my new contact details are in the new Handbook.

Damian Weare

The Secretary's Report was accepted without discussion.

8. Treasurer (*written report previously circulated*)

With the 2011 Accounts and AGM out of the way, the last couple of months have provided an opportunity to try to get up to date with some of the outstanding tasks. Normal daily transactions have been conducted without any major issues and the 2012 numbers have been crunched for the year to date. Additionally, I have been able to start to get to grips with some of the main action points needing to be resolved.

The first of these has been the question of a discount structure for students within the existing membership rates. Following on from BCRA's decision to grant a free upgrade to BCRA membership for students who take up the DIM subscription, and with the objective of making joint BCA/BCRA membership a reasonable proposition for students, various discussions have taken place. The result is that we will be proposing that a new Student DIM category be established, with a suitable membership subscription. The rate to be set is either to be modular (i.e. current CIM rate plus the BCA administration element) or as a straight discount on the normal DIM subscription. I believe that the choice between these two options needs to be aired in Council and then resolved accordingly; to that end I will provide further details to the meeting. The cost/revenue differential is not major, but the principle should reflect the view of Council rather than the recommendation of individuals.

Notwithstanding the above (which will not have a material bearing), a draft Budget will be available for the meeting. At present I see no imperative to review subscription rates based on the current situation, but would ask that any known expenditure outstanding for 2012 be notified to me as soon as possible. Estimates will be perfectly acceptable in the absence of definite figures.

Continuing this line of thought, I have previously referred to what I believe are unacceptable delays in submitting Regional Council funding claims. With that in mind, and with reference to the "BCA Funding of Regional Councils" document, I propose that Clause 1 of Section 5 (Process of Funding) be replaced as per the following:-

5) 1) The Regional Councils present their claims, including Scrutinised Accounts, to the Finance Committee. These claims are to be submitted as soon as possible following the end of the year in which the expenditure is incurred. The deadline for submission is to be the March BCA Council meeting; if final figures are incomplete at that point, an estimate is to be provided in order that the prior year's BCA Accounts can be finalised. All actual claims values are to be submitted by 31 December following the year of expenditure. BCA will be under no obligation to fund claims which are not submitted within this timescale.

Other than the above, I do not see any other necessary change to the document and believe the process is straightforward and transparent.

Looking forward, apart from the routine actions, I expect the next couple of months to be focused on reviewing options for a new accounting software package ready for implementation for 2013 Accounts and a fuller consideration of deposit accounts which could both improve the return on the Association's cash balance as well as spreading the risk of having a large fund with one provider. The software package I would not expect to be a major cost and I would plan to proceed with that as soon as possible, but the issue of reinvesting the cash reserve merits further consideration by Council and I will elaborate on this at the meeting.

The other significant task to be dealt with in the remainder of 2012 will be a formal Finance Committee review of 2011 Regional Council funding. In light of my earlier proposal, I would plan to have this complete and funds issued before the end of the year.

Paul Ibberson

PI: [Presented a document with an overview of the current financial position and a draft budget for 2013.] BCA's income typically comes in the early part of the year with the expenditure following on later. We are currently more-or-less in line with the original budget for 2012. PI then outlined the main items of expenditure he was expecting before the end of 2012. This included one more edition of Speleology, some costs associated with the Artificial Cave and the Regional claims. There is a considerable increase under the Regional heading over last year's expenditure. This is partly because CSCC has submitted a late request for funding from an earlier year. However it also reflects the wishes of PI and the Auditor that the current year's Regional expenditure be included in the audited accounts for that year. To enable this to happen we will double up this year paying a claim from 2011 and also the 2012 money. The Library and Expedition grants are paid in stages over the year to make cash flow easier. The current forecast for 2012 show us more or less breaking even.

2013 Budget

PI: Working on the basis that we are looking to break even in 2013, PI does not feel we should be altering the membership rates this year, unless there is a general view to the contrary.

LW: Feels we must be very close to the threshold for VAT registration.

PI: Doesn't think the Insurance fee counts in this.

SN: Much of what we do will be zero rated anyway.

LW: But that does still count in the total and could require us to complete a VAT return even if it is "nil".

DC: Reviewed it in the past and at the time the insurance fee was outside the scope, so we were fine. However a greater proportion of our income is now from membership fees, so this might need reviewing.

PI: Has it on the radar.

PI: Fairly confident about our income forecasts unless there is a large tail off in our membership. The draft expenditure largely remains as previously. There are a few unknowns. The Publications & Information heading

needs to allow for two editions of Speleology plus a Commissioning Editor.

JP: Should we be aiming for 3 editions per year?

LW: Yes, but it has never happened.

DW: We may need to review our subscription structure given the increasing costs of Speleology.

AE: This probably needs to be part of wider review for 2014.

Action 109: AE, PI and DW: to review the current subscription structure in conjunction with other key personnel and report to Council.

PI: Fairly comfortable that the P&I heading is about right. The Association budget includes about £250 for an accounts package.

Library & Expedition Funding

AE: Are we going to continue in 2013 as we have in 2012?

JP: The Library has worked hard to minimise costs, but is short of people time to do the cataloguing given the large quantity of stock that is coming in. Our Library Assistant does not want to do any more hours, and trying to find volunteers is tricky. A work-experience student is a possible way forward.

HB: It might be worth asking Sheffield or Manchester students. There are several unemployed people who might have some time available.

Action 110: HB to ask local students if they are able to offer time to help catalogue at the Library.

PI: There are bound to be discrepancies, but the budget is a reasonable picture overall. We may need to have a broader rethink in the coming year or so about the breakdown of membership.

DC: Where are we with the 3-yr agreement on our Policy?

PI: Unsure. PI needs to liaise with NW.

DC: Have we considered our reserves in light of the increase in insurance costs following the rise to £5m liability cover. The reserves were set at 1 year's turnover plus 2 insurance excesses, but our turnover is increasing so we may need to review this once again.

Student DIM

PI: Council expressed a desire to implement a student rate for DIM membership. The underlying purpose is to encourage students to join BCRA. After much discussion, PI has come up with two alternative ways to set the fee. The options are either adding the full £15 DIM upgrade to the normal student CIM fee of £8, making a total of £23, or we take the main DIM rate and apply a 50% discount giving a total of £16. The software writers would rather have the £23 as it will result in simpler forms.

HB: Could we give them the student rate only if we they choose to receive Speleology by e-mail.

AE: Should we run the risk of the deal costing us money or not? Potentially the cost of providing paper publications will outweigh the student membership fee.

LW: If we capture the students early on with loss leaders, how many will we keep?

AE: The main reason people drop out later is that they stop caving.

HB: Would be unhappy if we were losing money by offering a discount.

AE: Do they really need a copy of Speleology, or would they find it more attractive to have a cheaper rate?

DW: Really the only difference between CIM and DIM membership is that DIMs receive publications. To remove this benefit would, therefore, seem odd.

LW: There is a cost to providing it electronically.

DC: The technology does already exist. We do it for *Cave & Karst Science*.

AE: That would be the best thing for the students.

DW: Is fairly sure this will provide difficulties for David Gibson & Glenn Jones. DW believes there is a reason why David Gibson is currently unable to provide electronic copies of Speleology, but does not remember what it is. It is possible that we could avoid duplicating too much effort by giving student DIMs access to Speleology via the same password as their BCRA access, but this only works if they choose to become BCRA members too.

DC: BCRA is free, so we could make all BCA Student DIMs BCRA members by default.

DCh: BCRA would probably prefer them to actually opt-in to be BCRA members.

LW: Suspects that the only copies of the original Speleology pdf are with David Gibson. It would make sense for BCA to have an archived copy too. **Action 111: LW to ask DG for pdf copies of Speleology.**

Proposal: that a new membership category of Student DIM be created for 2013 at a rate of £16, comprising the standard DIM rate with a 50% reduction. If practical, Speleology will be provided as an electronic version only.

Prop: HB Sec: PI agreed unanimously

Regional Council Funding

PI: We considered 2010 Regional funding claims last year, but in May 2012 received claims for 2009 and 2010 from CSCC. This is not acceptable, so PI is proposing an addition to the Regional Council Funding document. It carefully provides quite a bit of flexibility, but establishes a principle.

LW: There was something brought up at the last CSCC meeting about a query relating to C&A travel expenses. Looking at the Regional Funding document, meeting expenses seem to be the only form of travel expenses payable.

PI: The one thing that was excluded from CSCC's request was funding for webhosting on someone else's server. There were then two further items that were held back pending receipt of further detail, namely work at Swildon's Hole and Bedlam Bank.

LW: Feedback from the CSCC Treasurer was that certain expenses were not being allowed because they were travel expenses.

PI: This is not the case. The CSCC Treasurer is very welcome to speak to PI.

BCA Reserves

PI: We have substantial reserves in a single account and PI had always intended to spread the risk. The Auditor then indicated that a sum of that size should be attracting a higher interest rate. Previously it had been difficult to find reasonable interest rates for organisations, but some major banks are now offering well over 2%. It is PI's intention to keep £30k in Barclays for day-to-day cash flow purposes, but is thinking in terms of having 3 separate other accounts with approximately £50k in each. The intention would be that the money in each account be put away for fixed periods on a rolling programme with a view to it earning more interest and the risk being spread. PI's criteria in choosing suitable accounts would be that they are FSCS covered and come from a suitably creditworthy organisation. He is currently thinking in terms of banks such as Barclays, Santander, HSBC and Investec.

LW: Would we be able to access all our money if necessary?

PI: Yes, with a loss of interest.

Proposal: *that PI be authorised to review options to spread the risk and increase the return on the Reserves and reallocate accordingly, subject to confirmation by Executive. Such reallocation should be subject to FSCS cover and with providers who are judged to be suitably creditworthy.*

Prop: PI Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

PI: Currently our Standard Life and Barclays accounts only have a single online signature. There are virtually no online accounts available that offer dual signatures.

DC: Believes that Lloyds are about to offer dual signatures.

PI: We need to add Katie Eavis to the list of those eligible to have read-only access to the online account.

DW: Believes that AE and DW should also have it as one of the checks imposed by Council for the account to be set up in the first place.

Proposal: *that Katie Eavis, Andy Eavis and Damian Weare be given read-only access to BCA's online accounts.*

Prop: PI Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

Cliffhanger

PI: This was cancelled at the last minute due to poor weather, but we had agreed to fund it. Some costs were paid upfront but all this was for items that can be used next year. PI intends to pay these costs.

Tax

PI: The 2011 Corporation Tax has been paid and the tax return submitted.

Regional Funding

PI: The Finance Committee will deal with 2011 funding and will then reconvene to do this year's.

Other Items

PI: We agreed to pay for Hidden Earth tickets for three Czech delegates, so there will be a small payment to be made to Hidden Earth, although in the event only 2 delegates turned up. There will then be a recharge the other way for an insurance policy on HE equipment that BCA has paid.

The remainder of the Treasurer's Report was accepted without discussion.

9. Conservation & Access

EL: Thanks to DW for his work on the Casterton Fell situation. This situation arose while EL was away and had been almost sorted by her return. The action taken by BCA was fully endorsed by EL. Hopefully this will have drawn people's attention to the various access agreements. Feedback from several people was that BCA's action was over

the top but EL continues to remind people that we are bound by both matters of law and our Constitution. LW has found someone to make a jig to produce little wire pegs for conservation tape. EL proposes that we pay for a bulk purchase of these, as well as a larger one from the original template too.

LW: There are also some 4mm pegs that Natural England is paying for. These are made from 316 stainless.

EL: £500 should cover them all.

Proposal: *that the C&A Committee be allocated a budget of £500 for a bulk purchase of stainless-steel pegs for conservation tape.*

Prop: EL Sec: LW

HB: There is one problem with Casterton Fell. There are a large number of cavers who are not members of BCA or its Member Clubs. They are often not aware that permission is required to cave on the Fell. Can we please put up the necessary information somewhere, such as at Bull Pot Farm or in Bernie's?

DW: This is really a matter for CNCC rather than BCA.

HB: Is it possible for e-mail to be introduced for all CNCC permits?

DW: Again this is really a CNCC matter, but DW believes all CNCC permits can now be applied for in this way. It is possible HB is referring to permits from Ingleborough Estate Office, but this has nothing to do with CNCC. A letter or phone call is necessary here.

AE: What is the situation with DCA? Does it also have similar issues?

JP: No. Leck and Casterton Fells are owned by large landowners who use the land for shooting. DCA does deal with Chatsworth and its tenant farmers, but that is all.

LW: What will be happening with the Disciplinary Process?

DW: This will be carried out in accordance with the Disciplinary Process in the Manual of Operations. A dossier will be provided for Council Members and we will then need to decide whether or not the Clubs in question have acted against our best interests and, if so, whether we will take any further action against them. *[Post-Meeting Note: In accordance with our Policy each Club, or its representative, has also been invited to attend the meeting and speak on their club's behalf. - Secretary]*

The remainder of the Conservation & Access Officer's Report was accepted without discussion.

10. Equipment & Techniques

AE: NW is very busy at the moment and is unable to be at this meeting. As explained in his Chairman's report, AE is trying to sort out the current difficulties and will be liaising with the various parties in the coming weeks. How does the meeting feel we should deal with the CNCC proposal outlined in Appendix 4?

SN: Is there precedent that this meeting deals with things for the common good of caving?

DW: Yes. As the senior democratic body, Council is the Body that deals with disputes if necessary.

JP: In view of the fact that AE is trying to deal with this, feels we should put it off.

AE: Sincerely hopes that we will have a solution at the January meeting.

Executive Action: It became clear at the start of July that an "alternative" E&T Committee was being set up by CNCC and DCA. Given this, Executive felt it was important to clarify from the outset BCA's position, particularly to avoid any misunderstandings about expenses. As a result the statement below was distributed to interested parties on 9th July 2012. I think it is appropriate for this meeting to consider its content today and approve its key messages. Comments relating to this from Jenny Potts are included in Appendix 3.

Damian Weare

Executive Statement:

Many people reading this will be aware of the progress made in the Equipment & Techniques Committee (E&T) over the last 18 months which has resulted in a suitable replacement to the DMM Eco-Anchor. This work has involved a large amount of volunteer time, and British Caving will undoubtedly benefit hugely in the years to come as a result.

Unfortunately, alongside this there has been continued disagreement on the content and presentation of the original anchor-placement document. As a result of this and the subsequent knock-on effects, Glenn Jones and Les Sykes of CNCC and Bob Dearman of DCA have now chosen to withdraw from E&T meetings and set up an alternative Committee. DCA will, however, still be represented at BCA's E&T Committee by Jenny Potts.

Given this, we feel it is important to clarify the role of BCA's E&T Committee. Nick Williams will remain as Chair and Convenor as requested overwhelmingly by the March BCA Council Meeting, and the E&T Committee will continue to function entirely as normal, with all Constituent Bodies and Regional Councils encouraged to send

representatives.

The Committee is currently developing a new general policy on the placement of resin-bonded anchors which outlines the key principles, but leaves Regions and Constituent Bodies free to use their own detailed procedures if they wish to. This is nearly complete and it is hoped that in the fullness of time this document will allow all Regions to come back “under one roof” and avoid the unnecessary duplication of effort, not to mention the ill-feeling, that will potentially result from having two Committees doing what is effectively the same thing.

In the meantime, CNCC will of course continue to be covered for all its activities under the BCA Public-Liability Policy irrespective of whether or not it chooses to take part in the E&T Committee. Any alternative Committee CNCC chooses to set up will not be officially recognised, or funded by BCA, but BCA will fund the direct costs of anchor placement in all Regions which apply to reclaim these costs. However any such requests will need to be directed through the E+T Committee. BCA will not directly fund Regional activities on bolt testing or bolt placing as part of other aid to the Regions.

DW: There is a mistake in the Executive Statement as printed in the Reports document and presented to today’s meeting (Sec’s note: and as shown above). The final sentence is not the one issued by Executive in July. Instead it comes from an earlier draft, but was felt to be ambiguous so was replaced with the following sentence in the final version: “However, this funding will continue to be managed through the E+T budget and requests for reimbursement will need to be directed through the E+T Committee.” This is DW’s error and he apologises for any confusion.

Rope-Testing

Nothing of significance to report.

Bob Mehew

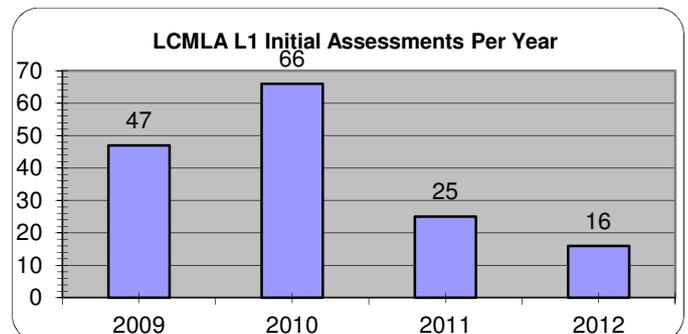
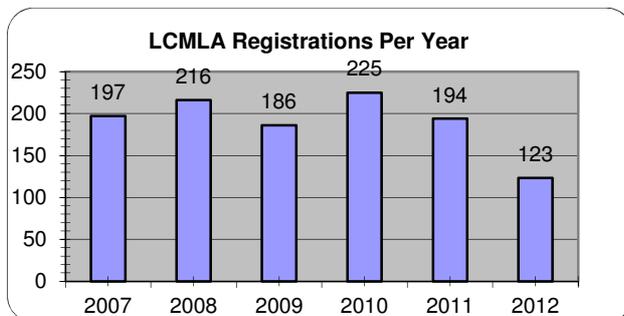
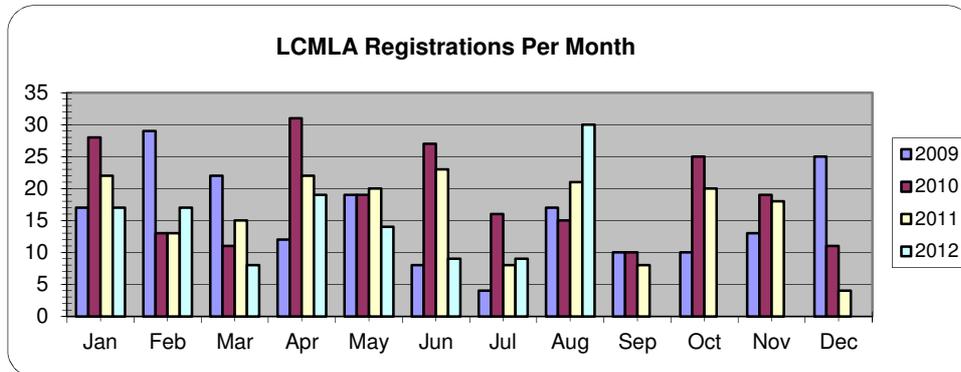
The remainder of the Equipment & Techniques Report was accepted without discussion.

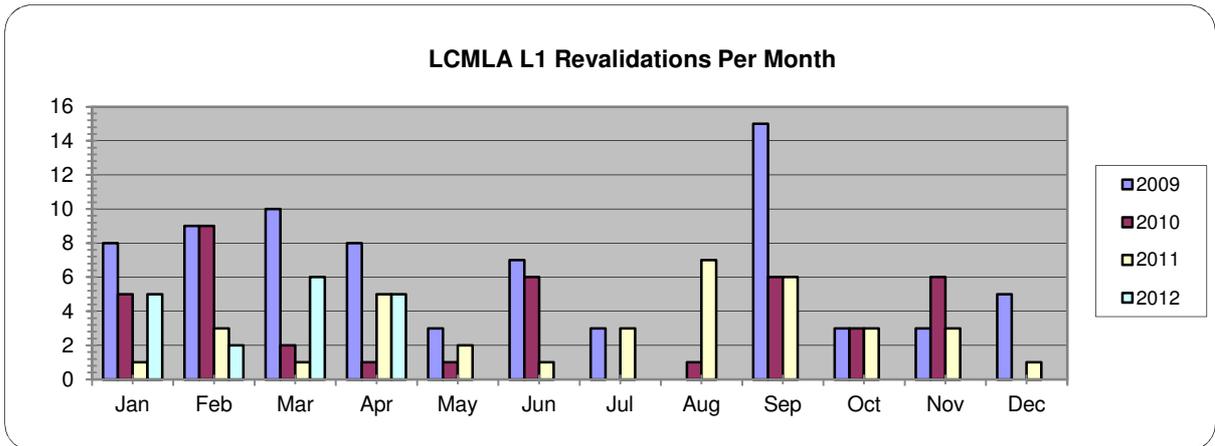
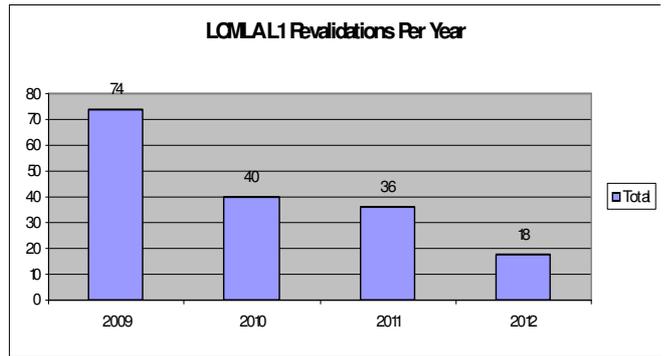
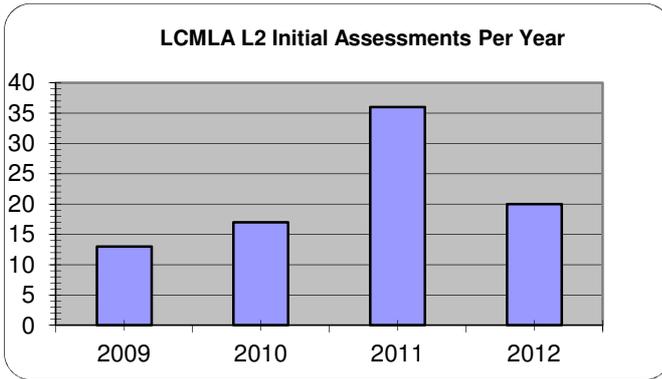
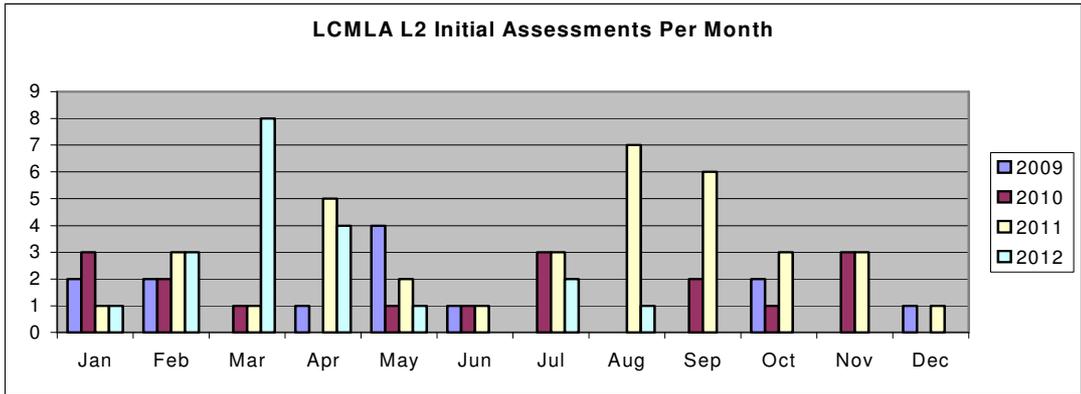
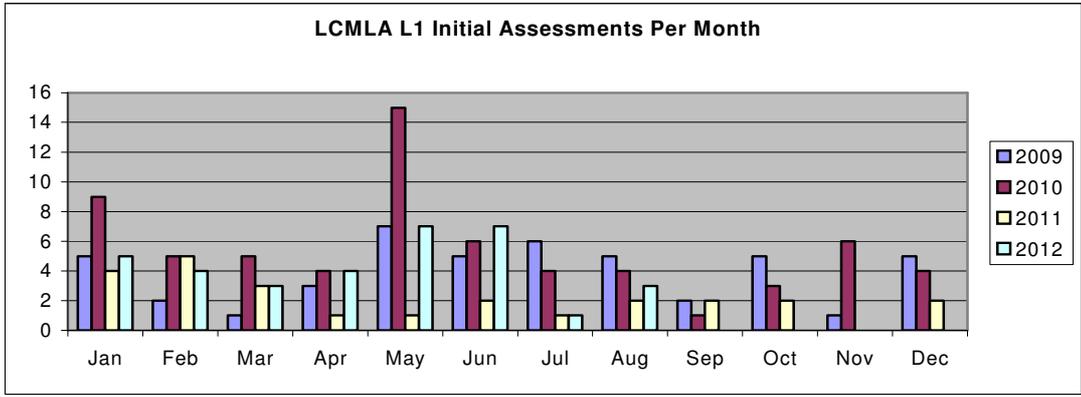
11. Training (written report previously circulated)

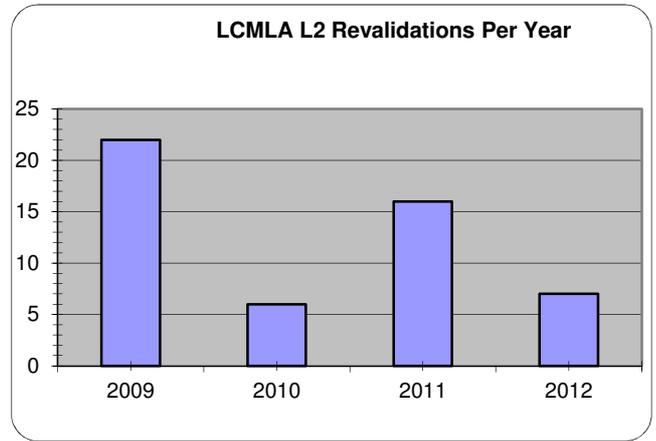
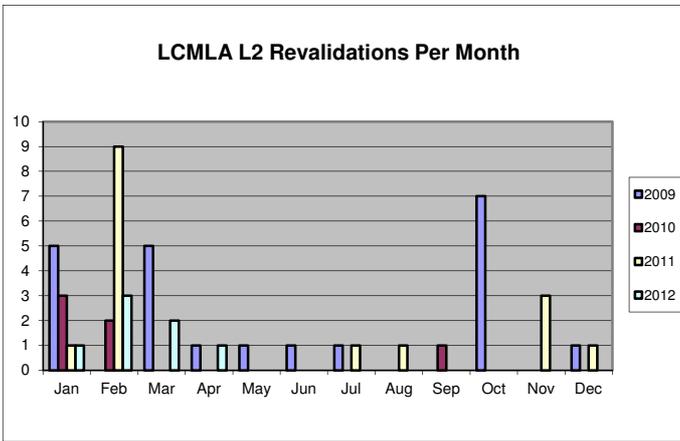
The CIC syllabus has now been published and distributed to newly qualified CIC holders.

I offer these statistics to demonstrate the health of BCA caving qualifications since the last Council meeting in June 2012. They are taken from January 2009 to the end of August 2012. Registrations and revalidations reflect the month in which payment was banked rather than the month in which they took place.

LCMLA Scheme Statistics







There have been forty eight (48) registrations for the Local Cave and Mine Leader scheme in the past three month period compared to forty (40) in the previous three month period. This shows at least consistency and even a slight improvement.

To date, overall registrations are down for the year 2012, with three months to go, compared to previous years.

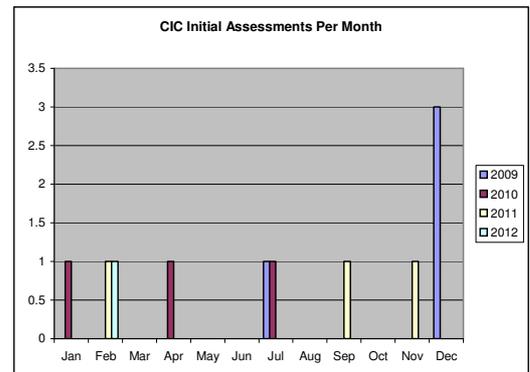
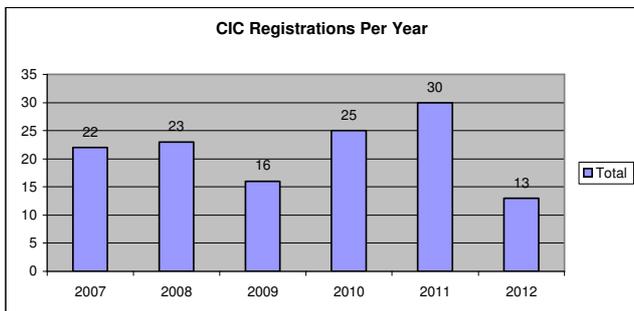
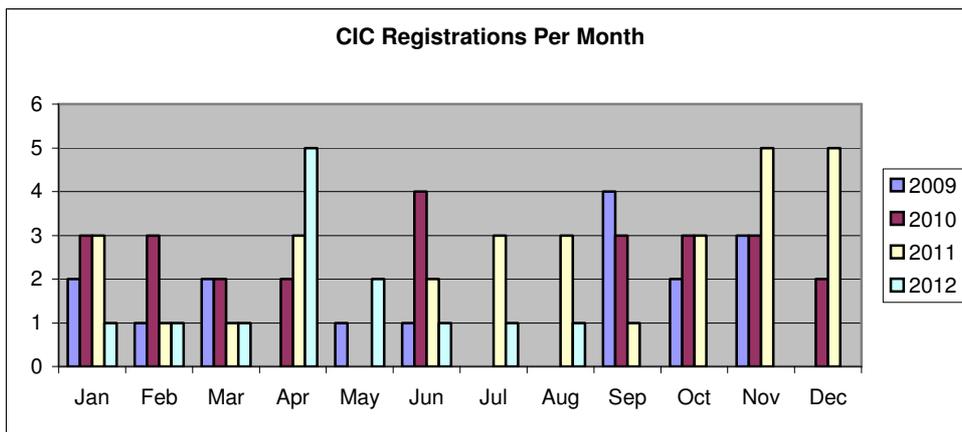
Eleven (11) people have qualified for the first time (initial assessments) at Level 1 during the past three months which is slightly up compared to the previous three months to that.

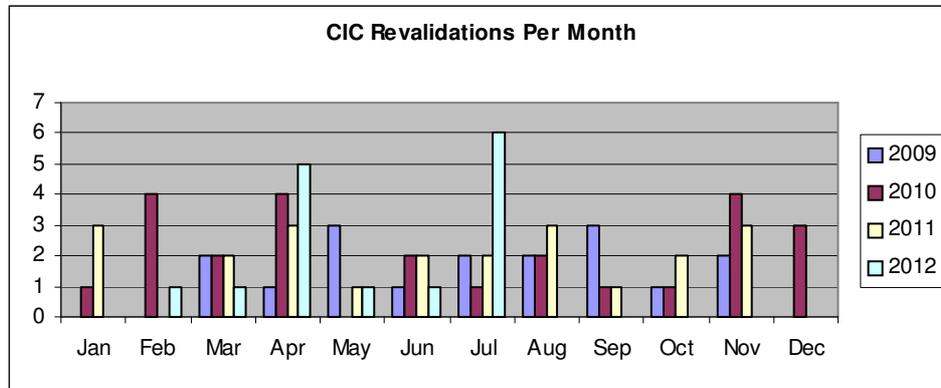
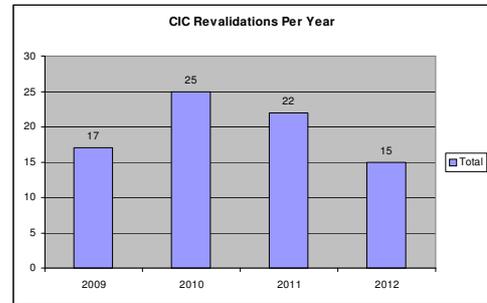
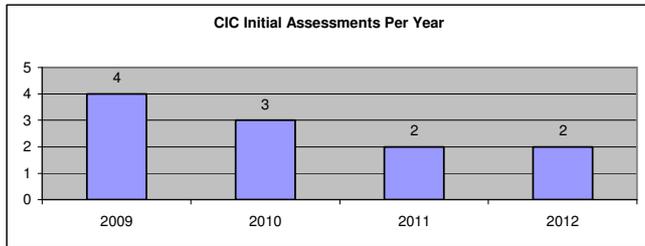
2012 has, so far, seen a drop in the number of LCML Level 1 initial assessments compared to previous years.

Level 2 initial assessments compared to Level 1 assessments are higher than last year.

There are a further 32 leaders due to revalidate in 2012. Overall there are 771 active leaders on the database.

CIC Scheme Statistics





CIC registrations are currently at the lowest level for five years.

The numbers of CIC assessments are currently consistent with those of last year.

There are 369 people registered on the CIC database. 80 are active CICs and 67 trainees. One member retired in 2011 and so far no active members have failed to revalidate in 2011 and 2012.

Revalidations

The table on the right shows revalidation profits for 2009 to 2011.

	LCMLA	CIC
2009	£1,887.00	£420.00
2010	£459.97	£225.00
2011	£179.60	£609.00
2012	£1,065.90	£340.00

Flooding Incident: an enquiry has been held into a flooding incident where a Local Cave Leader Trainer/Assessor with their candidate and clients was unable to exit a cave for a number of hours due to high water levels. The Training Officer was asked by BCA Executive to collect statements from people involved at all levels including CRO. After consideration, it was concluded that the issue should be taken no further.

Recreational Training Modules: Training Committee has agreed that the Training Officer will structure a set of training modules, on a variety of topics that would be available to recreational cavers. Module titles have been decided upon and the content will follow shortly.

SUI: Very recently, communications have resumed with SUI regarding the recognition of their leadership award in the UK.

Nigel Ball

LW: We appreciate the detail, but would it be possible to have more of a summary of trends, rather than a series of graphs in future reports?

The remainder of the Training Officer's Report was accepted without discussion.

12. Publications & Information

LW: DW has published the Radon Booklet online.

a. Webmaster

LW: Nothing to report since last time.

b. Web Services (written report circulated)

Our new recruit Matt Voysey has done a good job of moving DCA's domain across to the new webserver (Memset). The DCA took the opportunity to completely revamp the site as well. There are twelve more domains to transfer; with Matt's help I hope that they will be completed by the year end. Once that is done our underlying costs will be virtually halved because we can turn off the old webserver (Fasthosts).

The domains northerncavemonitor.org.uk and peakcavemonitor.org.uk are now hosted on BCA's webserver. These excellent sites document and facilitate the work done by cavers on behalf of Natural England to monitor the caving SSSIs. There is a question as to whether BCA or NE should fund these sites. I've recently passed this on to the Finance Committee for advice since it is bound up with Regional Council funding.

I've had several requests from our Web Services users to be able to pay electronically by Internet transfer rather than by cheque. I have the Treasurer's agreement and once Katie can view the bank statements on-line I will announce it to our users.

David Cooke

Natural England Websites

DC: Hosting these sites is likely to cost about £30 per year. Although this is not much, there are a number of others and the total for all of them is more substantial.

PI: Feels we should aim to get Natural England to pay for it.

JP: Since the Regions have grants from Natural England, maybe they should pay for them out of this grant. Will discuss with DCA Treasurer and suggest that DCA pay.

AE: Why are only 2 Regions receiving Natural England funding?

JP: Because they are the only ones who have done their reports properly.

EL: Disagrees strongly. In the past each Region submitted its reports properly. To suggest anything different is wrong. It all boils down to different Regional approaches.

LW: CSCC has had a lot of funding in the past, and we do still receive money, just not in the same way in some other Regions. CSCC is keeping an eye on the situation.

EL: Nationally we worked together to put in place a system and the North put it in place locally first.

JP: Funding is available if you have the appropriate contacts within the Region and can do the work as required.

LW: You need to have the personnel in place.

c. Newsletter

Discussed under Action Log review.

d. Handbook *(written report previously circulated)*

The Handbook was published and posted out at the end of July.

Council may be interested to know that there has been no increase in the printing cost per copy (£1.15) since I began editing the Handbook in 2007. However, overall costs have increased because we now print substantially more and also because postage rates have almost doubled in 5 years. We print more partly because we have more members, and also partly because we moved the AGM and consequently the Handbook publication date from early May to late July. As all new members receive the previous year's Handbook until the new edition is published, this means we get through more.

Damian Weare

AE: Thanks for DW for his work producing the latest version.

EL: Would like some spare copies to give out.

DW: All spare copies are now with Glenn.

The remainder of the Publications & Information Reports were accepted without discussion.

13. Legal & Insurance

See Appendix 2: Child Protection Policy Development

DJu: Following on from last meeting, DJu has put together a document on the way forward for the Child Protection Policy and Guidance. EL has recently attended a roadshow on the new Disclosure & Barring arrangements. It is clear that the Government is now taking a backward step, so DJu is pleased to report that we were correct not to worry our members about this previously. The only people in our Organisation who really need to be involved in checking are professionals.

LW: Would be interested in being involved in any discussions on Policy development.

DJu: Legislation in NI and Scotland is slightly different and the document has been amended slightly from the one in Appendix 2 to reflect this.

a. Insurance Manager

No report received.

The remainder of the Legal & Insurance Report was accepted without discussion.

Other Reports

14. Youth & Development

So not done a huge amount so far, sorry – China, crazy summer etc but a few things have been started. I gave a talk at Hidden Earth which was not so well attended. For those of you who went to the Opening Ceremony MadPhil commented on the age of the audience, saying how caving is aging. But my talk was the opposite. All but 8 were under 35 and most were 30 or below. Great! Sadly my mates came so, as someone put it, I was preaching to the converted! But there was some good feedback from those who did come.

I trying to write a piece to be emailed out on the “Adopt a Student Club Scheme”. The Universities are very receptive, so let’s see what grown up caving feels. I have some great ideas and hope to have something out by Christmas.

I attended a Scout meeting at Hidden Earth. This is a really good thing, as students and Scouts get lots of people into caving so it is important to do as much as we can to help them. I hope to help them find more leaders. They also plan on writing an Idiots’ Guide.

With some of my budget for this year I propose to buy a set of lamps and caving helmets to lend around, as in some areas hiring lamps have become very difficult and I think this would encourage people to run “Try caving” weekends and are a good resource to have.

I have been looking at the website and it needs updating. This is going to be one of my projects this year but I need to talk to Chris Jewell first. Also the “Try Caving” leaflets need reprinting and I intend to look into that this year.

So a bit to be going on with, but the hardest part is trying to get people on the same page!

Helen Brooke

HB: Would like to get an ‘Adopt a Club’ scheme off the ground. HB feels the youth are keen and it is a matter of bringing the “grown-up cavers” on board too – that is a challenge. With the lights, the intention would be to have ones that run off rechargeable AAs. HB is investigating discounts from several suppliers. The ‘Try Caving’ website is in a state and we need to look at this. The YSS and the Wessex are good at TryCaving but others need to be encouraged. HB hopes that the new lights will help with this. The biggest challenge is that it is an uphill struggle with the older cavers.

SN: Where are the lights going to be located?

HB: Centrally and then distributed by caver mail.

AE: Suggests HB brings a costed proposal to the next meeting. **Action 112: HB to produce a costed proposal for the new ‘Try Caving’ lights and bring it to the January meeting.**

DC: Thinks the ‘Adopt a Club’ scheme is a really good idea. It is useful to encourage clubs to agree that, for example, the Meets List is formally open to all members of their adopted Uni club.

HB: Will have a formal proposal by January to send to the Clubs.

Action 113: HB to produce a formal proposal to send to Clubs about the ‘Adopt a Club’ scheme.

The remainder of the Youth & Development Report was accepted without discussion.

15. Membership Administrator

BCA Membership to 1st October 2012

DIMs 421 (caving), 39 (non-caving), 9 (CIM Plus), 7 (BCRA Honorary), 1 (BCA Honorary) (including 245 BCRA members)

CIMs 3799 (caving), 998 (non-caving), 415 (student / U18)

Clubs: 157

Associates: 9

Access Bodies: 7

***New Clubs:** The following clubs have supplied the correct paperwork and payment in order to become BCA member clubs: Carleton Caving Club, Galway Geological Association and Over and Under CC.*

Actions on me:

93: Complete - see report in Appendix 1. Non-renewing questionnaire report took 18 hours to produce and process replies and a cost of £45.54 for envelopes and stamps.

95: No contact from NW and PI

102: No contact from NB, NW and PI

107: Complete

Glenn Jones

EL: People don’t realise they are covered for 3rd Party Liability in caves anywhere they are given permission to go.

AE: This also applies overseas. On a recent expedition non BCA-members were spending a lot of money for similar cover.

LW: People think the only caves they need their insurance for are the ones where they actually need to produce their cards. This is not the case.

JP: We could produce a piece of paper summarising what people get for their money. This could be distributed with the annual renewal cards.

Action 114: NW, DW and DJu to put together a summary of what insurance benefits BCA individual membership

provides and ask GJ to distribute it with the 2013 membership cards.

EL: Can we have a similar summary for landowners?

Action 115: NW, DW and DJu to put together a summary for landowners of the insurance benefits relating to BCA access agreements.

PI: Action 95 has been discussed with GJ by e-mail. There was a misunderstanding as to what it involved and it has now been dealt with.

The remainder of the Membership Administrator's Report was accepted without discussion.

16. Radon Information

I would like to raise two points for the attention of Council. Together they constitute a request for a budget to fund, in total, 10 radon detectors. The sum sought is £250 in total.

The first request arises from the recent breakthrough in the Nenthead area. I was approached by Steve Holding (NAMHO) regarding any knowledge of radon concentrations in a previously unentered part of mine system. BCA has no data at all from this part of England. In order to assist in providing wider access to radon data for the Nenthead system I would like to propose that BCA sponsors 5 detectors for placement to gain some indication of the concentrations within the newly found extensions to the mine. This system is an area that has had little research and any data is going to be an advantage and start to fill in a blank. There will also be an opportunity to understand potential concentrations attached to the mines of the north Pennine ore field.

The second arises from the recent Hidden Earth meeting. The present radon data we possess is, rightly, dominated by the data from the Carboniferous Limestone areas in which the main British caves are located. We also have a limited amount of data from caves/mines in Jurassic limestone. We have absolutely no data from the other important cave-hosting carbonate, the Cambrian limestone of west Scotland. The Carboniferous Limestone is an organic-rich reduced limestone and has high U content, giving rise to variable Rn concentrations. The Jurassic limestone is oxidised and has low U and consequently low Rn. The Cambrian limestones are lower in organic content and so, intuitively, it is likely to have lower Rn concentrations than the Carboniferous. However, this conjecture needs to be tested. I would like to propose that 5 detectors are donated to the Grampian SG, to be placed in one or more Scottish caves in the Assynt region. This may help in them formulating an approach to Scottish Natural Heritage to fund a larger study.

The cost is £20.75+VAT per detector, £250.50 in total, to be divided between NAMHO and Grampian SG, and this includes postage/packaging and processing. Therefore, from a relatively small investment BCA will gain new information that will be of benefit in providing the first information from these two areas which will lead to better informed decisions over entering the caves and mines in the areas.

Clark Friend

Proposal: **that BCA spends £250.50 on radon detectors for use in Scottish caves and an area of a mine in Nenthead.**

Prop: LW Sec: PI agreed unanimously

The Radon Information Report was accepted without discussion.

17. 2016

The June Council Meeting agreed to set up a 2016 Working Party and appointed Les Williams as convenor. The Constitution requires that the Working Party's Terms of Reference be agreed by Council. As they were not available in June, this was put off until this meeting. I suggest the Terms of Reference could be as follows:

1) To co-ordinate all aspects of the organisation and running of the 2016 Euro-Speleo Congress as directed by Council.

An initial meeting was held at the end of July and some of the key personnel appointed. Subsequently a site visit has been made to a possible venue which appears to offer what we need. The coming months will involve firming up a venue, liaising with key partners, looking for suitable people to fill other key roles and opening a bank account.

In relation to this, we need Council to approve a number of things:

1) *Bank Account: we would like to suggest Council approve the following motion:*

That DC be authorised to open a dedicated bank account for 2016 and that signatories be any two of: Les Williams, David Cooke, Andy Eavis and Damian Weare.

2) *Underwriting the Event: although every effort will be made to ensure it does not happen, in the event that the 2016 event runs at a loss, we need BCA to formally agree to underwrite these losses. We would therefore suggest the following motion:*

That BCA underwrite the 2016 Euro Speleo Congress.

3) *There will be costs associated with the event in the foreseeable future and certainly before any income has been received in ticket sales. As such we request that a suitable sum be transferred from BCA to the 2016 account once it is opened.*

That £1000 be transferred from BCA's main accounts to the 2016 bank account.

Damian Weare

LW: Would like to add to the Terms of Reference proposal as follows:

Proposal: ***That the 2016 Working Party Terms of Reference be:***

- 1) ***To co-ordinate all aspects of the organisation and running of the 2016 Euro-Speleo Congress as directed by Council, 2) To appoint a Convenor, Secretary and Treasurer plus others as required by the Convenor,***
- 3) ***To have its own bank account, be responsible for its own funds and report to Council at each meeting.***

Prop: LW Sec: BP *agreed unanimously*

AE: Ged Campion needs to play an important role in the Working Party.

LW: Appointments to the Working Party so far are Les Williams (Convenor), Damian Weare (Secretary), David Cooke (Treasurer), Andy Eavis and Ged Campion. We need authorisation to open the Bank Account.

AE: Suggests we switch one signature from AE to GC.

Proposal: ***that DC be authorised to open a dedicated bank account for 2016 in accordance with the bank's mandate and that signatories be any two of: Les Williams, David Cooke, Ged Campion and Damian Weare.***

Prop: LW Sec: PI *agreed unanimously*

AE: We need a limit on the underwriting.

DJu: Could we limit it to the funds in the Hidden Earth account?

LW: No. They are BCRA funds and they underwrite Hidden Earth.

DC: The only other organisation who could underwrite it is the FSE.

AE: They cannot and will not.

MD: Can we underwrite it to the extent of the money in the account, and switch proposals 2 and 3?

PI: The maximum potential cost is the total cost of the event if nobody turns up. When we know what that will be, then we should agree to it. However in the meantime it should be limited in stages. Currently it will be the £1k we transfer. We can then add more as and when the Working Party is able to come to Council and confirm greater financial exposure.

Proposal: ***BCA will underwrite such costs arising from the organisation of the 2016 event to be initially set at £1k and to be increased in stages as approved by Council.***

Prop: PI Sec: EL *agreed unanimously*

Proposal: ***That £1,000 be transferred from BCA's main accounts to the 2016 bank account.***

Prop: PI Sec: EL *agreed unanimously*

LW: The site visit was to the Halton Army Training Camp in Lancaster. There are some issues, as there are with any potential location, but it looks very promising. The gentleman in charge, Major Evans, is very helpful. Halton Camp is effectively a secure, fenced-off site with some buildings we can use. There are other buildings on the wrong side of a fence, so foreign delegates will need to be accompanied or have security clearance. The intention will be to use the Camp for accommodation and evening entertainment. We will then need some nearby lecture facilities and the next stage will be to approach Lancaster City Council with a view to acquiring their support and, hopefully, other venues. There is a college just around the corner, plus two schools. The town hall building also has an 800 seat, tiered concert hall. The real alternative to being based in Lancaster is 'tent city' near Dalesbridge in the Yorkshire Dales itself. However this would prove extremely expensive. LW will be requesting the Manual of Operations from NSS who arrange similarly large events annually.

DC: The old University building is in the middle of the town and could be useful.

The remainder of the 2016 Report was accepted without discussion.

18. Cave Registry

The Cave Registry Data Archive, hosted and funded by BCA, seems to go from strength to strength with new systems and catchments being added regularly. For example, courtesy of Andrew Atkinson, The Frozen Deep (you might have seen it on the news) survey data is already present and publicly available. Julian Todd gave an excellent talk/tutorial at Hidden Earth explaining how to use the archive and its software tools not just to archive the data for posterity but to facilitate a group of surveys working together on a live project.

The British Geological Survey has been in contact with me with a view to tying their dataset into the nascent National Speleological Sites Index. This has the potential to be a fruitful relationship.

David Cooke

The Cave Registry Report was accepted without discussion.

19. IT

I have conducted a review of the Internet based accounts packages that are currently available at a sensible price. The advantage of an Internet based package is that it can be viewed or updated from anywhere by anyone with permission. The cost would be in the region of £200-£250 per annum. I have passed the shortlist to the Treasurer for consideration. Those that look promising will be investigated further.

David Cooke

DC: Online packages can be very reasonable, coming out at around £200 each year. The big advantage is that the software can then be updated from anywhere. DC will need to liaise with anyone who interacts with the package before a decision is reached.

The remainder of the IT Report was accepted without discussion.

20. International Representative

Following my report to the AGM I visited the Yucatan in Mexico to attend the Annual Bureau Meeting of the UIS. This was held in conjunction with a National Conference of Mexican speleologists. Although the Conference was extraordinarily shambolic there were some very good papers presented by some very good cavers.

Obviously the exploration work being done in the Yucatan is spectacular, where they have one of the longest caves in the world, almost totally underwater. What was however highlighted was the extreme ground water pollution problem that they have which seems extremely difficult to solve.

However, the UIS Bureau Meeting which lasted over a couple of days, was talking about various International meetings with reports from all the UIS Commissions. Some of course are more active than others. Mostly depending on the energy of the Commission Chairman. Obviously a large part of the Bureau meeting was in connection with the next International Congress in Brno in July 2013.

Although there were no representatives from the Congress organising group present in Mexico there were several skype meetings with them and it would seem everything is well on track. Some detailed changes were made to the second circular which is now published and available on the website.

More recently on the weekend of 29th September in my capacity as President of the International Union of Speleology I attended the European Federation meeting in Muotathal Switzerland which was held in conjunction with the four yearly Swiss Speleological Conference.

Ged Campion also attend the European General Assembly and I am sure he will report on it separately. I was in parts of this meeting as an observer, but I was also there to promote the next International Congress. It would seem that of the 400 participants at the Swiss meeting a reasonable proportion will travel to Brno in July.

Otherwise, the Conference was very good with a lot of extremely interesting events on the last day, nearly 200 people went on a variety of caving trips in the neighbouring region. Particularly trips to the Holloch, one of the longest caves in Europe.

Andy Eavis

a. FSE

Since the last report to BCA in June there has been 1 gathering of the FSE, this comprised two bureau meetings and a General Assembly Meeting (GAM) which took place at the Swiss National Congress of Speleology in Muotathal in Eastern Switzerland on 28th – 30th September. The main issues this year are as follows;

Personnel: *Following the resignation of the former treasurer, a new treasurer and vice treasurer were elected. The office of vice treasurer is a new position on the bureau. The position was created to help shadow the treasurer in the event of the treasurer being unable to carry out their function. The office of auditor was also created. Henk Goutia (Netherlands) was elected treasurer, Ernest Geyer vice treasurer(Austria), & Jean Claude Theis (Luxembourg), auditor. It was recognised that the auditor's position must be outside of the bureau.*

Two new member countries have now joined the existing 24, Moldova and Ukraine. Denmark and Macedonia have not renewed their membership

International Caving Expedition database: *Report will be finalised soon. A call for volunteers will be sent to help update the database.*

European Cave Protection Committee: *Its work and budget were reviewed. Elsie Little continues to be copied into developments /policy.*

Shale Gas Work Group: *The letter has been sent to the European Commission. No reply has been received. The letter will be sent again by registered post mail.*

Euro Speleo Projects: *Report presented. No applications from UK but very good applications from a number of member countries.*

Organisation of EuroSpeleo Forums :

ES forum 2013 Millau near Montpellier (13th anniversary of FFS) BCA have provided history of UK caving to be put on poster.

ES forum 2013, at 21-28th July (16th UIS congress) in Brno, Czech Republic

ES Forum 2014 will be in Romania. Details will follow

ES Forum 2015 Applications will be invited. Bulgaria has expressed an interest.

European Congress 2016 will be held in UK

Speleo-TV project: *The workgroup includes 7 people from 5 countries. Elina Saarinen (Finland) has been officially nominated by the Bureau as co-ordinator of the workgroup (for 2012-2016).*

EuroSpeleo Magazine: *The workgroup counts 15 persons from 7 countries. Mihaela Micula (Romania) has been officially nominated by the Bureau as chief editor of the FSE magazine (for 2012-2016). Her team has produced an excellent online magazine that will go live in October.*

Cave Rescue Commission: *Christian Dodelin from France proposed the creation of a new commission which will concentrate on cave rescue issues in Europe. The commission will aspire to help improve standards for new countries joining the FSE who do not have established cave rescue organisations. Also the commission will create a database with information regarding specialisms that various countries can offer if needed.*

The next meeting of the FSE bureau will take place in Bruno in Czech Republic in July 2013.

Ged Campion

The remainder of the International Reports was accepted without discussion.

21. Media-Liaison

DW: Apologies to Chris Jewell, who submitted a short report with his apologies, but DW forgot to include it in the reports document. CJ reported that his role continued in a necessarily reactive way. There had been some media interest in the recent finds in the Mendips. This is all good publicity.

LW: There has been a string of positive publicity surrounding caving in recent years. This is very welcome.

The remainder of the Media-Liaison Report was accepted without discussion.

22. British Caving Library Report

The next meeting of the Library Steering Group will be on 12 October 2012 so this is an interim report to BCA Council.

We have recently had a query from the Secretary of a caving club with a Library as to whether it would be acceptable to BCL if they changed the wording of their constitution so that, in the event that the Club disbands, the Club Library is passed, intact, to the British Caving Library. LSG members discussed this by email and agreed that this was something to be encouraged and felt that this acknowledged the status of the British Caving Library. We now wait to hear from the Club concerned when the Constitutional amendment has been passed by their members.

Thanks to John Gardner the BCRA Archives website now has a digitised version of a set of superb photo albums, the work of Rev. William Paul Black. The albums were passed to the Library on permanent loan by the descendants of the Rev. Black, who took the photos of caves and caving during the 1930s and early 1940s with a camera he made himself. Rev. Black's family approved the project and are delighted with the results, which can be seen at <http://archives.bcra.org.uk>.

I ran a Library stand at Hidden Earth again this year and we took £200 in donations for duplicate books and journals, which we are pleased to recycle amongst cavers, both clubs and individuals. A large pile of assorted material went to the SUI Library (so our recycling is now international) and a complete run of BCRA Caves & Caving went to a British club. Chatting to cavers at Hidden Earth is raising the profile of the Library, which in turn helps to liaise with clubs to complete their collections and reminds them to send us their publications to try to ensure that we have a complete set of UK publications at BCL.

Thanks are due again to a number of people, Prof. Gunn in particular, for generous donations of books and journals to the Library. The work of re-cataloguing continues steadily but there remains a long way to go so we are looking for possible volunteers to help Mary and myself.

Jenny Potts

23. Any Other Business

HB: The Try Caving leaflets have almost run out and we could do with combining them with the SYWTGC leaflets,

JP: It would be useful to include the conservation aspects of the SYWTGC leaflet.

LW: You are not necessarily limited to a 3-fold leaflet.

DC: Please remember to update the URL of the Try Caving website on any new leaflet.

JP: There are currently about 50 Try Caving and 100 SYWTGC leaflets remaining. These could well run out shortly.

PI: What is the cost likely to be?

LW: Thinks we had 10,000 Try Caving leaflets printed last time. *[Post-Meeting Note: 2007 AGM Reports show 20,000 were printed but I am unable to track down the cost – Secretary]*

Action 116: HB, LW and JP to liaise on updating the Try Caving leaflets.

24. Date, Time & Place of next meeting

The next Council Meeting will be on Saturday, 12th January 2013 at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch.

The meeting closed at 14:50

Action Log – October 2012

No.	Action by ...	Details of Action
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36	DW	Put together a Manual of Operations
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54	NW & DJu	Liaise with SUI with a view to helping them streamline their insurance situation.
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October 2011

83	PI	Produce an Asset Register and liaise with NW/EP over the total replacement value of our insured equipment.
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March 2012

97	NB	Liaise with NW and Training Committee with a view to implementing Council's wish that T/As work for BCA as individuals.
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102	NB, NW, PI and GJ	Liaise to find a way to implement Council's wish that all BCA Award Holders need to be BCA members.
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June 2012

104	DJu & NB	NB to ask TC for potential Child-Protection Officer. DJu to consider other offers.
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105	DJu	L&I Committee to look at current legislation and review BCA's existing Child Protection Guidance.
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October 2012

108	DW	Liaise with David Gibson re: Erin Lynch being included on the Speleology distribution list.
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109	AE, PI and DW	Review our current subscription structure in conjunction with other key personnel and report to Council.
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110	HB	Ask local students if they are able to offer time to help catalogue at the Library.
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111	LW	Ask David Gibson for electronic copies of all previous versions of Speleology.
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112	HB	Produce a costed proposal for the new 'Try Caving' lights and bring it to the January meeting.
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113	HB	Produce a formal proposal to send to Clubs about the 'Adopt a Club' scheme.
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114	NW, DW and DJu	Put together a summary of what insurance benefits BCA individual membership provides and ask GJ to distribute it with the 2013 membership cards.
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115	NW, DW and DJu	Put together a summary for landowners of the insurance benefits relating to BCA access agreements.
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116	HB, LW and JP	Liaise on updating the Try Caving leaflets.
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Appendix 1: Non-Renewing DIM Questionnaire Report

Non renewing DIM questionnaire responses

Questionnaires sent out: 74

Questionnaires returned: 15

NAME (optional): 11

1) I was a BCA member for about X year(s)

1yr (4)

4 months (1)

2 years (4)

3 years (1)

2) My age-group is:

31-40 (2)

41-50 (4)

51-60 (1)

61-70 (2)

71+ (1)

3) On average in 2012, I have been underground;

Once a month (3)

Not at all (5)

3-4 times (1)

4) How does this compare with last year?

Less than last year (9)

5) I originally joined BCA because

Needed insurance to gain access to a mine (1)

Insurance for a trip (3)

I was working in a mine (1)

Interested in caving (1)

For cave leader award in army, now joined CSCA (1)

As a CIM, then a DIM (1)

Access to caves and mines (1)

6) I have not rejoined in 2012 because..

The places I go would not be covered by BCA

Deceased

Insurance elsewhere

Contracted arsenic poisoning whilst clearing a mine shaft

I was supposed to be moving abroad

Family commitments – no time (2)

Health reasons

Lost renewal letter

Didn't need the insurance

Injuries following a car accident

Clerical error by my club – will be rejoining as a CIM

7) I think BCA does the following things well:

Maintain access to caves

Everything – magazine is excellent (2)

Conservation, Training and qualifications

A central source of information, easy to access information, PLI cover

8) I think BCA could improve:

The website is confusing, especially for beginners

9) Will you be rejoining?

I have rejoined (3)

Maybe in 2013 (2)

No – due to health issues, I have been advised not to go underground again

Yes, please send details (2)

Yes, in August as a CIM

10) Is there anything else that might be of use to us?

Glenn Jones, October 2012

Appendix 2: Child Protection Policy Development

PERSONAL STATEMENT

At our AGM, Saturday 9th June 2012, I reconfirmed my willingness to continue as the nominated person who should be the point of contact for all matters connected with the Child Protection and Vulnerable Groups legislation and the responsibilities that this does now, or might in the future entail.

I feel that this function does quite naturally fit within the role of the Legal + Insurance Officer, but that it does not of necessity have to, nor is such my chosen or preferred *modus operandii*. I do strongly prefer that a separate and independent person be appointed and responsible to Council for all CPO matters, but with the caveat that such a person should be **interested, willing and well prepared** to take on the task. In an ideal world I would choose someone not so young as to have no direct experience of dealing with children/young persons and vulnerable groups, or of the development of UK legislation endeavouring to quite properly protect such persons, but somewhat younger than my 70 years! I say this because it is an area of the law within which misconceptions abound!

I do therefore hope that someone will step forward with a view to taking over the CPO role in the near future, so that I could then briefly work with that person and then step aside after a short time.

1 TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT of an updated CHILD PROTECTION POLICY and a REDEFINITION of CPO POSTHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Looking back across the 12 years that I have been CPO for the National Representative Body (NRB) of British Caving I feel the need to highlight just three significant considerations that have become lodged in my mind:-

- 1 Liaison with my local police authority upon being appointed as the NRB's Child Protection Officer revealed a total shambles and a blatant lack of understanding or interest in the subject of Child Abuse in Sport: and
- 2 the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) whilst undoubtedly fulfilling a sound role in sporting activities where child abuse has been known to be rife, fuelled by the trust between parent, child and coach, has little or no real interest in the outdoor pursuits world where child abuse is minimal and the **neglect** element is far more important than the 'traditional' one of **abuse**: and
- 3 over those 12 years only two 'incidents' have been brought to my attention; upon very preliminary basic enquiry one turned out to be merely a dispute between an outdoor pursuits provider and its LA client, and the other simply a nasty angle on a personal dispute between two adults; neither had any foundation or actuality involving child abuse or neglect.

It is therefore my belief that child abuse in British Caving taken across all so-called 'sporting' activities lies somewhere between *nil* and *de-minimus*. I would hope that it is in fact the former rather than the latter. But who can say?

This does in no way surprise me. If one stops for a moment to consider the nature of caving, why people go caving, what their motivations are, etc, and compares these with the same considerations for the vast bulk of the rest of the sporting world, well there are huge differences! Broadly most sports have a strong competitive element – caving does not. Most have tangible goals, e.g. the 4 minute mile, the Olympic Gold Medal, etc, caving does not. Many are aimed at bodily fitness – caving does not, etc, etc.

Whilst not being in any way complacent I do thus tend towards the minimalist approach to my responsibility area based upon common-sense concepts, such as – *if it ain't broke then don't mess with it* – and also, perhaps even more importantly – **don't make a big issue out of well intentioned legislation that is aimed at a very different sphere of activity.**

As the NRB for British Caving we have a duty to monitor legislative change in all areas that affect our activity and/or the legitimate concerns of our membership, both individual and corporate, and to try to give them best advice based upon it. **But we should not be taking on board issues that are irrelevant to our activities.** For instance; in BCA, we do not, **employ or select** people who will then go on to have any direct dealings with children, therefore we do not need to attend courses on vetting and barring.

In all human relations the concept of **Duty of Care** should be regarded as a factor. It is a universal responsibility incumbent upon almost all citizens for the welfare of one or more other human being dependant upon relative experience and knowledge levels. The experienced caver is expected to know far more about the possible dangers and pitfalls inherent in caving than the absolute novice, and thus owes a considerable **Duty of Care** to the newcomer. The same principle applies to children and vulnerable groups, only much more so dependent upon their performance related

age and/or perceived physical and mental abilities. I regard the understanding of the concept and practical implications of **Duty of Care** to be fundamental to the consideration of **Protection**, whether it be of the *Child* or of so called *Vulnerable Groups*.

2 FORWARD PLAN – PROPOSED ACTIONS

I suggest that initially a small group of us, **ideally chosen from cavers with some direct experience of interaction with young persons and/or vulnerable groups**, work together through email to examine the relevant activity areas and BCA's most prominent areas of risk exposure, and then go on to develop a Draft Policy Document from scratch, and finally see how this looks alongside our presently accepted brief policy /guidance documents that were written, with the benefit of wide consultation, a few years ago.

3 MOST IMPORTANT RELEVANT UK LEGISLATION

- **Childrens Act 1989.**
- **Human Rights Act 1998** – particularly affects 'authorities' (BCA being 'The UK Authority' on caving)!
- **Disability Discrimination (Meaning of Disability) Regulations: SI 1455: 1996.**
- **Protection of Children Act 1999.**
A substantive Act for the protection of children and young persons, with residential care at its core.
- **Disability Discrimination Act 2005** - considerably amends and updates the 1995 DD Act.
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006** - mostly concerned with barring and vetting, whilst bringing in responsibility for all persons that can be regarded as more than averagely vulnerable.

4 UPDATE FOR THE OCTOBER 2012 COUNCIL MEETING

The above jottings represent my initial response to the request made at Council 151, 9th June 2012, and generally agreed upon, for this subject to be placed on the Agenda for Council 152, 6th October 2012. They have now been seen by Damian Weare and Elsie Little with only very minor alterations needing to be made.

As the next step I particularly seek the views of our Training Officer, Nigel Ball, but now throw the subject open to all members of Council before returning to and focussing upon the heading set out at "1" above.

David Judson, September 2012

Appendix 3: Comments on Executive Statement on E&T Issues

There are two points in the statement circulated by the Executive on 9th. July which were felt to be potentially misleading and both Jenny Potts and Les Sykes have contacted the Executive separately to clarify:

Email from Jenny Potts, 31 July:

For the avoidance of any misunderstanding re. the BCA E&T Committee. Both CNCC and DCA Equipment Representatives have resigned from the BCA E&T Committee and the CNCC representative has resigned from BCA Council. Hence, as DCA Secretary, I have asked Nick to forward to me any paperwork relating to the BCA E&T Committee.

Should I be invited, I am content to attend the BCA E&T Committee solely as an observer on behalf of DCA with no active participation in the dialogue.

I would be grateful if you would forward this to BCA Council.

Jenny Potts, DCA Hon. Sec.

Statement from Les Sykes regarding the statement from BCA Executive. 31 July:

The executive states '*Unfortunately, alongside this there has been continued disagreement on the content and presentation of the original anchor-placement document. As a result of this and the subsequent knock-on effects Glenn Jones and Les Sykes of CNCC and Bob Dearman of DCA have now chosen to withdraw from E&T meetings*'.

This statement is untrue; I withdrew from the BCA Equipment & Techniques Committee because during Any Other Business at the March 2012 meeting, it transpired that I have been deceived during a negotiated agreement at the October 2011 meeting and that deceit had been withheld between meetings and until the end of the March 2012 meeting, only being disclosed during Any Other Business.

The Executive statement states '*any alternative Committee CNCC chooses to set up will not be officially recognised*'.

This statement is not strictly true; CNCC has not chosen to set up any alternative committee. CNCC and DCA are working together to continue the work that is unfinished, work and research that will benefit all UK cavers and improve safety. However, to make the most efficient use of resources it has been necessary to have a committee structure; this is not just CNCC but two regional councils

working in partnership to which any one may participate.

It should also be noted; that the March 2012 BCA Equipment & Techniques Committee meeting was the most productive and forward thinking meeting that I had ever attended (about 20 years worth). New research and new objectives were agreed and I was looking forward to the challenge and taking BCA E&T forward with anchor and equipment testing.

However, the timing of the admission of the deceit (during AOB) was deplorable and in my opinion, the parties should have been informed prior to the meeting so that a sensible resolution could have been sought. Furthermore, the latest that the disclosure should have been presented was the beginning of the March meeting, as this technically affects the signing of the October meeting's minutes as a true and accurate record.

CNCC are working in partnership with DCA because the representatives from both these regional councils believe that the work should continue to enable all cavers to have safe systems of entry and egress into the caves and potholes of the UK.

Les Sykes

Jenny Potts, September 2012

Appendix 4: CNCC Report

As the CNCC representative has declined to attend all BCA meetings until the current dispute is resolved, I have prepared a brief report for the meeting.

Casterton Fell: The committee will be aware of the recent upsurge in unauthorised access by cavers on Casterton Fell especially during August. I took the unprecedented step of involving BCA at an early stage, my reasons for this were that all CNCC associate member clubs are BCA members and that I felt BCA should issue notice to its membership regarding the access arrangements and the implications of not applying those access arrangements. It was decided to post a notice on the caving forum as a quick and effective method of getting the message out quickly. However, as usual this did provoke the usual keyboard thumping antagonists into action. I do feel that the message has been understood and that now Alan Speight will be a little busier. I have discussed the issues with the land agents on a number of occasions and they appear to be content with the action that has been taken.

It is now up to the member clubs to play their part and request permits for access to the Fells where there is an agreed access agreement.

Commercial Groups: Another problem that has arisen on Leck and Casterton Fells is that of commercial groups. This was brought to my attention by the Estate Office after two web sites had been browsed where caving on Leck and Casterton Fells was advertised. I have spoken to the organisation concerned and outlined the position of the CNCC and that of the land owners; the land owners are not happy with commercial enterprises earning money from using their land.

Manchester Hole: After the incident at Manchester Hole when it flooded due to North Yorkshire water undertaking scouring operations at the reservoir without prior notice; Graham Mollard has attended a meeting with the water authority and CNCC is to pay for some lockable signage that can be changed when there is a planned release of water, this will be managed by Graham Mollard.

CNCC Rep to Training Committee: I have been asked by Graham Mollard if he can attend BCA Training meetings on behalf of the CNCC training Officer, I have agreed to this.

Equipment & Techniques: The CNCC Council meeting on the 28 September 2012 passed the following resolution.

CNCC regrets that matters have come to a head in the way they have, especially considering the valuable work all parties to the dispute do on a voluntary basis.

CNCC believes that the only way out of this impasse is for a compromise even though this will be distasteful to both sides. With these considerations in mind

CNCC recommends that:

1. All CNCC representatives who have resigned from the E&T and other BCA Committees should rejoin those committees
2. Nick Williams should formally apologise and step down as convener of the BCA E&T Committee but should remain a member of that Committee so as to retain his expertise in technical matters
3. Andy Eavis should act as Convener of BCA E&T Committee until the next BCA AGM when a new Convener will be elected
4. All bolts around pitches, whether for SRT or Ladder and Lifeline, should be installed and maintained in accordance with the full protocol including the need for SRT competence of the installer
5. Bolts solely to be used for fixed aids, e.g. chains, hand-lines etc, i.e. those which could not in any circumstances be mistaken for SRT rigging bolts, could be installed by persons without SRT competence but meeting all other requirements of the protocol

All the above to take immediate effect.

Les Sykes, September 2012