



**Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch**

**Present:**

Andy Eavis (AE)	BCA Chairman
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor
Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Nigel Ball (NB)	BCA Training Officer
Nick Williams (NW)	BCA Equipment & Techniques Officer
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer / Webmaster / 2016
David Cooke (DC)	BCA Cave-Registry / IT Working Group / Individual Member Rep.
Bernie Woodley (BW)	Club Member Rep.
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Member Rep.
David Checkley (DCh)	BCRA Chairman
Idris Williams (IW)	ASCT Rep.
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Rep.
David Jean (DJe)	DCUC Rep.

The meeting commenced at 10:38am.

**1. Chairman's Welcome**

AE welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from: Chris Jewell, Jenny Potts, Alan Finch, Paul Ibberson, Faye Litherland, Clark Friend, Bob Mehew, Ged Champion, Mick Day, Stephan Natynczuk, Glenn Jones, Owen Clarke, Hellie Brooke, Emma Porter, Mike McCombe and Mark Williams.

**3. Applications for Club Membership**

The Windermere Caving Club and the Buckfastleigh Caving Group have provided the correct paperwork and payment to become BCA Member Clubs.

Proposal: *to accept the Windermere Caving Club and the Buckfastleigh Caving Group as Member Clubs.*

Prop: NW, Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

**4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013 (previously circulated)**

Proposal: *to accept the Minutes from 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013 as a true record*

Prop: NW, Sec: SH *agreed unanimously*

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

**Review of Action Log**

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

**Action 54 (Liaise with SUI):** NW: No further progress, although SUI seem less interested than they were.

**Action 83 (Produce Asset Register):** Ongoing - needs to be updated for recent equipment purchases.

**Action 97 (T/As working as Individuals):** Ongoing – to be discussed at the next meeting.

**Action 104 (Ask at TC for Potential CP Officer):** Ongoing – to be discussed at the next meeting.

**Action 105 (Review of CP Guidance)**

IW: Apologies for not having noticed this earlier, but it is not always clear in the Child Protection document whether it refers to young persons in the legal sense or the traditional sense of all under 18s. An example is section 2.05.

DJu: This has been intentionally worded in this way. The problem is that the law distinguishes between Young Persons, who are 16-18, and all other children. In reality, DJu does not feel we should be actively encouraging all children, but instead those aged 14 or above. It is difficult to know what term to use to describe these people, since “Young Person” is defined in law. For this reason the wording was left intentionally ambiguous.

EL: Maybe “minor” is an appropriate term.

LW: The current document does place some people, such as Scouts, in a difficult position as it appears to suggest that under 16s should not be going caving.

IW: Would like to see consistency across the document.

**Action 125: DJu & IW to liaise on amending proposed policy to clarify our approach to young persons.**

DJu: Does this need to go the AGM for approval?

DW: Yes, the AGM is the final stage for any amendment to Policy.

**Action 109 (Review of Subscription Structure):**

DW: We are intending to bring some concrete proposals to the October Council Meeting. In all likelihood these will then need to be implemented in time for 2015 rather than 2014 as we had hoped.

**Action 112 (Costed Proposal for Try Caving Lights)** Ongoing

**Action 113 (Adopt a Club Scheme)** Ongoing

**Action 115 (Summary of Landowner Insurance Benefits)** Ongoing - DJu to take the lead on this.

**Action 116 (Update of Try Caving Leaflets)** see Youth & Development Report

**Action 117 (NB liaise with NW over Irish Qualification Recognition)** Complete

**Action 118 (HB & JP liaise over students at Library)** Complete

**Action 119 (Free legal advice)** EP has passed our Disciplinary Procedure to a friendly lawyer and is awaiting feedback.

**Action 120 (Investigate AAIAC)**

DW: The Adventure Activity Advisory Committee (AAIAC) appears to fit us as a sport, but its remit seems limited largely to safety and training matters and, as such, is probably best suited to the Training Committee rather than BCA.

Membership is for individuals, rather than organisations and meetings take place at least three times a year in London.

Nominations for 2013 Membership were due last week. If we feel we can justify the cost of attending meetings and we have someone with a training background who is willing to work pro-actively as a member, then the Committee does seem to suit us.

**Action 121 (Revise Regional Funding Document)**

DW: PI has not yet come up with a form of words. He intends to discuss it with the Finance Committee and then re-draft accordingly.

**Action 122 (Bowline on Bight Statement)**

DW: This was published in the newsletter and on the BCA website. It was then also picked up by Descent, the UKCaving forum and several Regional newsletters.

**Action 123 (Rope-Test Funding Request)** PI reports that he and NW have agreed to fund it through the E&T budget.

**Action 124 (Access & Commercial Caving Statement)** see Chairman's and Secretary's Reports.

## **Officers' Reports**

### **6. Chairman** (written report previously circulated)

*Discussions on a number of organisational matters within BCA have accelerated in the last few weeks with a hope that some proposals may be put to the AGM in June. The problem with access for commercial caving is being considered very carefully and again reports on this will be presented to near future Council Meetings.*

*There are an on-going number of discussion areas within BCA organisation that again are being looked at and will be brought to future Council Meeting.*

*Hugh Penney has accepted the job as Commissioning Editor for Speleology. He will assist Erin, who remains the overall Editor. It would appear an edition is imminent.*

*Many thanks to my Council colleagues, particularly Damian and Paul, not to mention members of the Ghar Parau Committee who met recently.*

*Andy Eavis*

NW: An advert for the Commissioning Editor was placed in Speleology and we received a number of people who were interested. In the end Hugh Penney was appointed as a sub-contractor with a total annual budget limit of £5k to include potential fees to contributors.

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

**7. Secretary** (written report previously circulated)

**AGM Weekend:** *I have not yet had any enquiries and have only 2 beds booked. Although this is not entirely unsurprising at this stage, it does indicate that we need to do everything we can to encourage a reasonable turn out. Adverts to be placed in the next issues of Descent and Speleology will hopefully help achieve this, but it is likely to need a bit more personal cajoling too. If Council Members could work hard on their various Clubs and each manage to bring a full car in June, then we should have it sorted!*

**Access & Professional Caving:** *The January meeting placed an action on Executive to "prepare a statement on access and commercial caving for the next Council Meeting". A consultation on this has brought over 12,000 words and 20 sides of responses and revealed plenty of potential common ground. On the basis of this and the brief from January's meeting, we have nearly finalised a proposed statement. It is hoped that we will be able to present this to Council Members in very good time for the next meeting.*

**Faye Litherland:** *Faye has reluctantly decided to step down as Individual Member rep to Council, as new work commitments mean she will be unable to attend meetings on Saturdays. She intends to continue her work on the E&T Committee. Faye's resignation now leaves two Individual Member vacancies on Council in addition to those roles that are due for re-election at the AGM. I should like to record my thanks to her for her work over the last few years.*

**AGM Elections:** *The posts of Secretary, Conservation & Access Officer and Legal & Insurance Officer, plus two Club and two individual member reps are due for re-election at the AGM. The deadline for nominations to reach me is this Council meeting. The Club reps whose posts run out are Bernie and Emma, and the Individual reps are Mick and Cookie.*

**Secretary 2013-16:** *As I've just mentioned, the post of Secretary is up for re-election in June. When I stood again 3 years ago, I knew I would have a reasonable amount of time to devote to the role. However from September this will change. As we're not overrun with volunteers and I believe I will have enough time to do a reasonable job, I am willing to stand again. I cannot yet be sure that the same will apply in 2016, though, so be warned!*

*Damian Weare*

AE: We are hoping to have a talk on at least one overseas expedition on the Saturday evening.

NW: Perhaps we could ask Glenn to post out a note about the AGM weekend with everything he sends out in the coming weeks.

**Action 126:** DW to liaise with GJ and update the AGM page of website.

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

**8. Treasurer** (written report previously circulated)

*The recent focus of my attention has been work on preparation of the 2012 Accounts. There remain some notable items to incorporate into the 2012 figures, but these were anticipated and I am comfortable with progress to date. I would again request that Council members advise me of any outstanding items relating to last year for their own areas as soon as possible. I intend to draw a line under 2012 as soon as the next Finance Committee has reviewed 2012 Regional funding (estimated as the end of March). At that stage I will then look to have a draft reviewed by the independent examiner and a final version ready in good time for the AGM.*

*With regard to the proposed redistribution of the main deposit, various options have been considered. As Council members may be aware, the general level of secure investment returns has deteriorated over the past few months and it seems that many interesting offers are rapidly snapped up and then promptly withdrawn. This makes it difficult to prepare all the necessary paperwork (signatories, I.D. verification etc) quickly enough to take advantage of slightly improved terms as they become available. However, we are at present in the process of transferring the first tranche of reinvestment to a Santander 12 month fixed term deposit account; this though illustrates the on-going problem well – when initially identified, the rate was 2.00% and a few days later it had been reduced to 1.75%. It does though still represent a fair return and more importantly spreads the risk of the current single deposit. Other options are also under review and once this first transfer is complete I expect, with Executive approval, to be looking to transfer a second tranche as soon as possible.*

*The next significant item on my calendar is the formal Finance Committee consideration of 2012 Regional Caving Council funding. As previously stated in the revised funding document, accounts or best estimates are now required. I will be issuing a reminder but would be grateful if Council members could check their regional treasurers are aware. (Note that where estimates are provided, these will be accrued into the 2012 Accounts and only paid over once actual figures have been approved by Finance Committee).*

*Day-to-day matters continue to be progressed. Cash management has been a bit frustrated by the need to have funds immediately available for reinvestment as dictated by the shifting sands of deposit account offers; this has meant more funds in the current accounts than is ideal, but my expectation is that the longer term gain will more than offset the short term loss of interest.*

*Unfortunately I will be unable to attend Council on 16 March, but if there are any specific queries which need my attention I*

will be pleased to deal with them directly or as arising from the meeting minutes.

Paul Ibberson

AE: PI reports that CSCC has now provided the missing information and accounts from previous years.

DJe: The William Pengelly Trust has just opened an account with the Principality paying 2.8%. It is a charity, though, so maybe the same rate is not available to BCA. [*Post-Meeting Note: the current rate for a Principality 1 yr bond seems to be 1.5%*]

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

## 9. Conservation & Access

EL: Has made a vigorous response on the reorganisations in England. What will come from this is unknown. EL has kept a close eye on fracking around the country and has no concerns at present. EL is grateful to the Regions for continuing to keep a close local eye on the situation. Thanks also to LW for taking delivery of the pegs which will be distributed shortly.

*The Conservation & Access Officer's Report was accepted without discussion.*

## 10. Equipment & Techniques

NW: The next meeting has been rescheduled for 14/04 and consequently there is nothing to report at present.

BW: Cambrian would like to record its reservations about certain aspects of the new installation document. We have been in discussion with NW about this and Robin Weare will be attending the next E&T meeting.

### **Rope-Testing** (*written report previously circulated*)

*Some dynamic drop test work on Y hang knots has been undertaken and a short report on initial results from a preliminary investigation has been produced, see [tinyurl.com/YHangKnots](http://tinyurl.com/YHangKnots). Some further work has yet to be conducted and a fuller report produced. One clear feature of my experience in drop testing is that loading of parts of ANY KNOT other than via the designed load points (active ends) MAY result in the failure of the knot to hold the caver's weight.*

*As part of back ground work, a statement was found issued last year by the BMC, see <http://www.thebmc.co.uk/climbing-wall-death-due-to-knot-failure>, stating "A correctly tied bowline is an accepted way of tying into a harness, but it is imperative to tie a stopper knot in case the bowline is incorrectly tied or loosens and inverts".*

*Work is now underway on investigating the best knots to use in a Cows Tails.*

*A puller has been acquired and will be located at the Bradford Pothole Club with their kind permission. It is planned to equip it with a means of electronically measuring extension and load so as to provide static testing of rope (and other items), thus complimenting the dynamic test capability.*

Bob Mehew

NW: We have acquired a hydraulic tensiometer which will be stored at the BPC.

## 11. Training (*written report previously circulated*)

*The Training Committee meeting scheduled to be held on 26/02/13 had to be postponed due to the illness of the Training Officer. Many of the agenda items had been offered by him and therefore there was little point in the meeting going ahead. Unfortunately, rearranging the meeting has proven to be impossible as members of the Training Committee could not reschedule at an agreeable time. All agenda items will therefore be rolled on to the next scheduled meeting of 07/05/13.*

*The Local Cave Leader and Cave Instructor awards are continuing to progress. The following data has been generated by the Training Administrator for your review.*

*Since the last BCA Council meeting the following has occurred:*

### **Local Cave Leader**

*33 registrations*

*12 Level 1 assessments*

*12 Level 2 assessments*

*14 Level 1 revalidations*

*6 Level 2 revalidations*

### **Cave Instructor**

*2 registrations*

*0 completed assessments*

*4 CIC revalidations*

Nigel Ball

IW: Scouts are concerned about BCA membership being a requirement for Award Holders. Scouts would be happy if there were no additional cost and no need to rejoin annually.

DW: What is the concern with rejoining annually?

IW: It is another thing we may forget to do that will invalidate our Awards.

*A number of issues have arisen recently which have caused us to review existing guidance and documentation available to the various Training sub-Committees. Some critical gaps have been identified and, as BCA could find itself in a difficult position as a result, Executive, in conjunction with the Training Officer and Chairmen of the NCP and CIC Panels, issued some interim guidance early in January (see Appendix 1). We are grateful for the positive feedback we have since received on this.*

*Obviously we are now looking to Training Committee and Council to ratify this at the next available opportunity. The next Training Committee meeting will be on 7th May. Council needs to decide whether it wishes to wait for Training Committee's input first, or whether it is appropriate to ratify at least the key messages in the meantime.*

*Damian Weare*

DW: Bob Mehew has spotted an unfortunate error in the published document. When updating the Disciplinary Procedure DW forgot to include a small difference between the procedure for Award Holders and non-Award Holders. As such the potential range of sanctions listed does not include suspension or removal of an Award. We will, therefore, need to issue an amended version. As far as considering the document today is concerned DW suggests it would be appropriate to wait until Training Committee has had a chance to consider the document.

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

## 12. Publications & Information

### a. Webmaster

LW: Met the IT Working Party Chair and concluded that the website is going to be migrated into docuwiki format. Thanks to DW and Mary Wilde for their work in keeping the existing site up to date.

### b. Web Services *(written report circulated)*

*Our Web Services users are now able to pay electronically as well as by cheque. This has been requested by several of them. It is particularly useful for the many small payments that are required. Thanks are due to the Hon. Treasurer and Katie Eavis for helping to put the new procedure in place.*

*David Cooke*

DC: There has been a small outage, the first that DC is aware of.

### c. Newsletter

LW: We have a newsletter editor, Ben Heaney, who is very keen. We all now need to help him by providing content.

### d. Handbook *(written report previously circulated)*

*Work begins shortly on the next edition. As usual I will need Officers, Constituent Bodies and Regional Councils to review their entries. Minor amendments can be made fairly late on, but I would appreciate some notice of anything that's going to need layout changes.*

*I did mention last year that I would be more than happy to pass on the job to someone else if they can be found. From September it looks like I will have less free time than I do at the moment, so I am even more anxious to find a replacement for next year. No doubt nobody will be found, but it would help me enormously if we could.*

*Damian Weare*

DW: In the longer term it does not really seem to make sense to have an almost immediately out-of-date paper Handbook alongside a website. In the modern era, our time and resources are probably better spent ensuring we have an effective and up-to-date website. This will also help reduce costs.

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

## 13. Legal & Insurance

DJu: Nothing to report.

### a. Insurance Manager

NW: Nothing to report.

## Other Reports

### 14. Youth & Development

*The Try Caving website still sucks but I have had a few people offer to help and had a meeting two weeks ago. I started doing some work on the leaflet, but it still needs more and I need to get hold of Gonzo?*

*I move to Glasgow very soon, so this may be a big problem for getting to meetings as it already takes 3hours from the Lakes and now another two will be added. I am still very keen to keep involved, and will look into rail links but they don't look particularly easy to Alvechurch.*

*I hope to get the leaflet drafts before June and the posters from Mary are good. I would like to print them but can't send them from my phone. I would like to do a bit of changing then have 100 printed depending on cost.*

*Hellie Brooke*

LW: If the print run of 100 refers to leaflets, then it is usually extremely cost ineffective. If it refers to posters, then it is probably worth talking to Jerry Wooldridge.

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

## **15. Membership Administrator**

### **Membership to 8 March 2013**

*DIMs 330 (caving - with another 4 for processing next week), 42 (non-caving), 6 (CIM Plus), 4 (BCRA Honorary), 1 (BCA Honorary) (including 221 BCRA members and 12 student members)*

*CIMs 3312 (caving), 816 (non-caving), 416 (student / U18)*

*Clubs: 142*

*Associates: 5*

*Access Bodies: 6*

*New Clubs: The following clubs have supplied the correct paperwork and payment in order to become BCA member clubs: Windermere Caving Club, Buckfastleigh Caving Group.*

*2013 renewal process: Both Clubs and DIMs seem to have been unusually efficient at returning renewals this year, I have found it impossible to keep to (my own, self imposed) turn around time of two weeks for Groups - I will increase the (renewal) turn around time to three weeks for 2014 just to be able to manage expectations.*

*Admin: In response to the following query presented at the January meeting - DC: Could we please have the BCA logo on the membership card? I have been in conversation (email) with DC and NW and we have agreed that I will run down the current card stock during the 2013 renewal process and agree a new card design during mid 2013 for all new card orders that follow.*

*The Membership Administrator's Report was accepted without discussion.*

## **16. Radon Information**

*Nothing to report on the general enquiries front.*

*Communications have been re-established with the HPA and the proposed Nenthead study is now scheduled for Easter.*

*Nothing has yet emerged from the Scottish groups regarding when they want to carry out work. This was partly dependent upon obtaining other grant money.*

*Clark Friend*

*The Radon Information Report was accepted without discussion.*

## **17. 2016**

DW: We have put in a formal bid with our preferred venue, Halton Camp, and have received positive initial feedback but are still waiting for a formal response.

LW: Securing the venue is the key. Once we have done this, we can then move quite quickly, holding meetings with the various groups involved.

DW: The Craven PC has generously agreed to extend their winch meet to run during part of our event. We are very grateful for this. We are awaiting a response from the CNCC.

*The 2016 Report was accepted without discussion.*

## **18. Cave Registry**

*Brendan Marris supplied me with the latest version of the Cambrian Cave Registry. I have uploaded it to the website and it is now available for use by the public.*

*David Cooke*

*The Cave Registry Report was accepted without discussion.*

## **19. IT**

*Whilst there is nothing new to report this quarter, I have spent some time discussing the BCA website with the Webmaster. The general feeling I get from Council and others is that this should be the working party's next priority. I have a solution in mind that I've used with several other websites, I simply have to persuade the Webmaster it fulfils all his criteria.*

*The IT Report was accepted without discussion.*

## **20. International Representative**

*On Tuesday 5th March I flew to Brno, Czech Republic and met with Zdenek Motycka, Chairman of the next International Congress. The following day there was a meeting of the entire team organising the International Congress for 21st-28th July 2013.*

*In the evening we skyped with George Veni, Vice-President of the UIS and Fadi Nader, Secretary General. Everything seems to be going well with the preparations for the Congress. There are currently over 800 people registered. It is expected that there will be between 1500 and 2000 participants in total. Several excursions are sold out so people must hurry up and register if they have not already done so.*

*On Thursday 7th March I had a meeting with Zdenek and Pavel Bosak working on a draft Congress programme. This looks very good. There are 350 papers and posters, many of which are extremely good. We visited the Congress facilities which all looked very Russian Spartan, large and exactly the sort of thing we need for a large caving conference.*

*There will be a Speleo Bar in a very large marquee that will be open most of the time throughout the entire Congress. All looked good to me.*

*The next meeting I got to is the ACKMA Conference in New Zealand on 14th May followed by the Australian Speleological Federation Conference on 21st May. I will report back on those at the AGM on 16th June.*

Andy Eavis

AE: The Speleo Bar will be open from 8am to midnight.

### **a. FSE**

*The last General Assembly Meeting (GAM) was held at the Swiss National Congress of Speleology in Muotathal in Eastern Switzerland from 28-30 September.*

*Organisation of EuroSpeleo Forums:*

- *ES forum 2013 Millau near Montpellier (13th anniversary of FFS).*
- *ES forum 2013 21st-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.*

*The next meeting of the FSE bureau will take place on 18th May in Millau near Montpellier (13th anniversary of FFS). The Agenda is as follows:*

- 1 *Opening of the General Assembly Meeting*
- 2 *Quorum - Presentation of voting delegates and observing countries*
- 3 *Welcome of new members*
- 4 *Approval of membership fees payments for 2012 & 2013*
- 5 *Approval of last 2012 General Assembly Meeting report*
- 6 *Situation of the 30 European member countries*
- 7 *Report of the Bureau 2012-2013*
- 8 *Financial report 2012 & 1st semester 2013*
- 9 *Annual report of the Protection Commission 2012-2013*
- 10 *Report about the EuroSpeleo Projects 2011-2012*
- 11 *Information on Participatory status within the Council of Europe*
- 12 *Report from Speleo-TV FSE workgroup*
- 13 *Membership of the FSE in the European Environmental Bureau ([www.eeb.org](http://www.eeb.org))*
- 14 *Caving insurance with Axa*
- 15 *Report from EuroSpeleo Magazine FSE workgroup*
- 16 *Information on the International Caving Expeditions database (ICE db)*
- 17 *Organisation of EuroSpeleo Forums 2014 & 2015, 2016, 2017*
- 18 *Election 2013-2017 of FSE President and Secretary-General*
- 19 *Annual fees 2013 & 2014, Provisional Budgets 2012 & 2013*
- 20 *Miscellaneous*

AE: The event in Montpellier will be very good.

LW: We probably need to keep an eye on Item 14 of the Agenda: Insurance with AXA.

*The remainder of the International Reports was accepted without discussion.*

## **21. Media-Liaison**

*No report received, as CJ is on expedition in Mexico.*

## 22. British Caving Library Report

The Senior Assistant Librarian, Mary Wilde, and I continue to process new material as it arrives and are gradually working our way through the backlog of unsorted material. One volunteer is now working from home to catalogue modern surveys in batches so they can be housed in an orderly manner at the Library. We also have another volunteer who has offered to work in the Library for a day or two every month, which we hope will help to speed up dealing with our backlog. Trevor Faulkner is now well advanced in re-starting BCRA's foreign journal exchanges which had lapsed and is now starting new exchanges to obtain relevant material from abroad. I am giving a presentation on the British Caving Library and Caving Archives at the BCRA Science Symposium being held at British Geological Survey on 9th March and intend to have an open day at the Library for interested participants and others on 10th March.

*Jenny Potts*

AE: Do we know how many people attended the Library Open Day?

BP: 6-8 people.

*The remainder of the Library Report was accepted without discussion.*

## 23. Any Other Business

### Annual General Meeting

AE: It looks as though there will be at least 3 different field trips available on the Saturday, as well as a talk on a major overseas expedition.

## 24. Date, Time & Place of next meeting

The next Council Meeting will take place on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at The Rotary Centre, Castleton to follow on from the AGM.

*The meeting closed at 12:10*

## **Action Log (as at March 2013)**

No.	Action by ...	Details of Action
-----	---------------	-------------------

36	DW	Put together a Manual of Operations
----	----	-------------------------------------

54	NW & DJu	Liaise with SUI with a view to helping them streamline their insurance situation.
----	----------	---

### October 2011

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

### 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.
----	----	---

### June 2012

104	DJu & NB	NB to ask TC for potential Child-Protection Officer. DJu to consider other offers.
-----	----------	--

### October 2012

109	AE, PI and DW	Review our current subscription structure in conjunction with other key personnel and report to Council.
-----	---------------	--

112	HB	Produce a costed proposal for the new 'Try Caving' lights.
-----	----	--

113	HB	Produce a formal proposal to send to Clubs about the 'Adopt a Club' scheme.
-----	----	---

115	DJu	Put together a summary for landowners of the insurance benefits relating to BCA access agreements.
-----	-----	--

### January 2013

121	PI	Revise Regional Funding document to clarify our approach to C&A travel expenses
-----	----	---

124	AE, PI and DW	Prepare a statement on access and commercial caving for the next Council Meeting.
-----	---------------	---

March 2013

- 125     **DJu & IW**     DJu & IW to liaise on amending the proposed Child Protection Policy to clarify our approach to young persons.
- 126     **DW**     DW to liaise with GJ and update the AGM page of website.

## **Appendix 1: Interim Guidance to NCP, CIC Panel and Local Panels**

*Letter sent to all Trainer Assessors:*

Dear Trainer-Assessor

### **Guidance to Local Panels, NCP and CIC Panels**

Thank you for the important work you do on BCA's behalf in your role as either a LCMLA or CIC Trainer-Assessor.

As you will be aware, the various Local Panels, NCP and CIC Panels all play an important part in the work of BCA's Training Committee. Recently, however, it has come to our attention that there is little, if any, guidance available on how the various Panels should operate. In part this is good because it encourages local initiative. However, BCA is an increasingly complex and multi-faceted organisation, and it is important that everyone approaches certain matters in the same way. In particular BCA must ensure that its actions and those of its various Sub-Committees do not either conflict with its core aims or the work of other Committees, or potentially bring BCA into disrepute, either legally or morally.

For this reason we are today issuing some guidance for immediate implementation. As a democratic organisation, the content will be debated and ratified by both Training Committee and BCA Council in the fullness of time, but for the time being the guidance should be followed by all Local Panels, the NCP and CIC Panels.

A copy of this guidance is enclosed for your information. If you have any queries, please feel free to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Damian Weare

Secretary (*on behalf of BCA Executive*)

### **Guidance to Local Panels, NCP and CIC Panels**

#### **Part 1: Background – BCA, Training Committee, NCP, CIC Panel and Local Panels**

BCA is a democratic organisation which operates according to the will of its members as expressed at Annual General Meetings. The AGM elects BCA Council to run BCA on its behalf. In turn BCA Council asks a number of Standing Committees and Working Groups to deal with certain key areas on its behalf.

The Training Committee is one of the Standing Committees and is made up of representatives from each of BCA's Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies, as well as people co-opted for their knowledge and experience of Training issues.

Council allocates Training Committee an annual budget and gives it a specific remit as well as some general guidance on how to operate. Beyond this Training Committee runs itself with the final proviso that, as the senior democratic body, BCA Council has the final say in any decision.

In a similar way Training Committee has chosen to delegate some of its work to its own sub-Committees. The National Co-ordinating Panel (NCP) advises on the overall running of the LCMLA Scheme, while the CIC Panel advises on everything relating to the CIC Scheme. As these bodies are unelected, they are free to make decisions on day-to-day issues relating to their Awards but anything more substantive will take the form of a recommendation to Training Committee, which makes the final decision on implementation (subject to ratification by BCA Council).

Because of the local nature of the LCMLA Award and the number of Trainer Assessors involved, it operates through Local Panels. These meet to consider local issues relating to the Scheme as well as providing a voice for individual Trainer/Assessors to make suggestions to NCP for how the Scheme might be developed. In this way good ideas can work their way up the system for ultimate approval by Training Committee in conjunction with BCA Council.

## **Part 2: Local Panel Guidance**

### **Background**

The LCMLA Scheme operates through six Local Panels:

- a) Derbyshire
- b) Military
- c) Northern
- d) N. Wales
- e) Southern
- f) S. Wales

### **Expectations**

It is expected that each Local Panel will:

- hold at least 3 meetings per year;
- keep Minutes of these meetings, as outlined below;
- elect its Area Liaison Officer every 3 years;
- follow the membership procedures laid down by the NCP;
- give each Provider attending the meeting an equal vote;
- hold revalidations;
- host Trainer-Assessor workshops;
- provide a list of previously-allowed sites and any exclusions therein;
- limit its business to issues directly relevant to the LCMLA Scheme, either locally or in general;
- abide by BCA's Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures, details of which are given below. In particular Meetings should refrain from discussing the conduct of named individuals, whether present or absent from the meeting, when there is any chance that this could relate to a potential complaint or Disciplinary Matter. If there is any doubt, discussion should cease pending advice from the Training Officer and/or Executive.

### **Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of meetings should include:

- details of those present
- apologies for absence
- any matters raised from previous minutes
- any written reports (which should be attached to the minutes)

- details of discussions on specific issues, points raised and decisions taken, including where appropriate records of votes for and votes against.
- a means of indicating actions to be taken outside of the meeting, such as an "Action Log".

In the interests of effective communication within BCA, it is considered good practice to distribute Draft Minutes before they are accepted by the next meeting, rather than waiting for Approved Minutes. However Draft Minutes should be agreed by at least two other senior members of the Panel, the Training Officer and at least one of BCA Executive prior to wider publication.

Once agreed, Draft Minutes should be distributed to:

- all members of the Panel;
- all members of the NCP;
- the Training Officer and Training Administrator;
- any other interested parties.

Only in the event of significant changes being made at the following Meeting, should approved Minutes also be distributed.

### **Area Liaison Officer**

The Area Liaison Officer (ALO) is elected for a 3-year term by the Local Panel members. The ALO's role is to:

- arrange Local Panel meetings;
- represent the views of the Local Panel at the NCP;
- ensure the Panel follows the expectations outlined above.

### **Publications**

In principle BCA wishes to encourage publications. To this end, the Publications & Information Officer is available to provide advice on design, layout, proof-reading and eventual publication. During any work on written publications the following guiding principles should be followed:

- Before work commences, the NCP Chair and BCA Training and Publications & Information Officers should be consulted;
- All publications should be professional in layout and accurate in content;
- Nothing should be published that conflicts with the work of another part of BCA or could be seen as libellous;
- Other people's work should be properly cited, and written permission obtained for use of their diagrams, photographs or text.
- A document can only be published once approval has been given by the Training Committee and BCA Council. Until this point all documents are draft versions and should be clearly labelled as such and the distribution of them appropriately restricted. If something needs to be published more urgently, such as a safety warning, then BCA Executive should be consulted.

### **BCA's Complaints & Disciplinary Procedures**

- Panels and their members should be aware that BCA has clear Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures. These are reprinted in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for information. If there is any doubt as to how a particular issue should be dealt with, it is recommended that the Training Officer or one of BCA Executive (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) be contacted directly.

## **Part 3: National Co-ordination Panel (NCP) & CIC Panel Guidance**

### **Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of meetings should include:

- details of those present
- apologies for absence
- any matters raised from previous minutes
- any written reports (which should be attached to the minutes)
- details of discussions on specific issues, points raised and decisions taken, including where appropriate records of votes for and votes against.
- a means of indicating actions to be taken outside of the meeting, such as an "Action Log".

In the interests of effective communication within BCA, it is considered good practice to distribute Draft Minutes before they are accepted by the next meeting, rather than waiting for Approved Minutes. However Draft Minutes should be agreed by at least two other senior members of the Panel, the Training Officer and at least one of BCA Executive prior to wider publication.

Once agreed, Draft Minutes should be distributed to:

- all members of the Panel;
- all members of the Training Committee;
- the Training Officer and Training Administrator;
- any other interested parties.

Only in the event of significant changes being made at the following Meeting, should approved Minutes also be distributed.

### **Publications**

In principle BCA wishes to encourage publications. To this end, the Publications & Information Officer is available to provide advice on design, layout, proof-reading and eventual publication. During any work on written publications the following guiding principles should be followed:

- Before work commences, the BCA Training and Publications & Information Officers should be consulted;
- All publications should be professional in layout and accurate in content;
- Nothing should be published that conflicts with the work of another part of BCA or could be seen as libellous;
- Other people's work should be properly cited, and written permission obtained for use of their diagrams, photographs or text.

A document can only be published once approval has been given by the Training Committee and BCA Council. Until this point all documents are draft versions and should be clearly labelled as such and the distribution of them appropriately restricted. If something needs to be published more urgently, such as a safety warning, then BCA Executive should be consulted.

### **BCA's Complaints & Disciplinary Procedures**

Panels and their members should be aware that BCA has clear Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures. These are reprinted in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for information. If there is any doubt as to how a particular issue should be dealt with, it is recommended that the Training Officer or one of BCA Executive (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) be contacted directly.

## **Appendix 1: BCA's Complaints Procedure**

### **General Principles**

- Complaints should be treated seriously and investigated.
- Complaints should be resolved as quickly as reasonably practical given the volunteer nature of the organisation.
- Anyone involved in a complaint (either as the person being complained about, or the person making the complaint) should be given the opportunity to state their case.
- Written records of all actions, including details of the investigation carried out, should be kept and copied to one or more of BCA Executive.
- Any complaint of a potentially criminal nature should bypass the process below and be immediately passed onto the Police. One or more members of BCA Executive shall also be informed as soon as possible. All responsibility for BCA's response will then rest with them.

## **The Procedure**

### **Stage 1 (Informal Complaint)**

Initially an informal complaint should be made to an appropriate person in BCA, such as the relevant Officer or, if the complainant is unwilling, or unable to approach that person, then with one of BCA Executive. The emphasis at this stage is on dealing with the complaint as efficiently and informally as possible

### **Stage 2 (Formal Written Complaint)**

If the complaint cannot be dealt with satisfactorily at Stage 1, then a formal complaint should be made in writing to the appropriate person in BCA. This will normally be acknowledged in writing within 14 days and the recipient should immediately inform one or more of BCA Executive of the complaint and their intended course of action. In most situations it is anticipated that the complainant will receive a formal written response within 3 weeks of initially making the complaint.

### **Stage 3 (BCA Council)**

Should the complainant be unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, then they should write to the Secretary explaining their complaint. The Secretary will normally acknowledge receipt within 14 days, and include an invitation to attend the next Council Meeting, where the complaint will be discussed. If the complainant is unable to attend, they can opt to have the complaint considered in their absence, or for discussion to be postponed until the next Council Meeting. It will normally be expected that complainants will present their complaint within this timescale, or else their complaint will be rejected. Following the Council Meeting the Secretary will normally write within 14 days to formally advise of Council's decision and the mechanism for appealing.

### **Stage 4 (Appeal to BCA AGM)**

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3, then they have the right to appeal to an Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel will be convened by a Chair, who will have been appointed by BCA Executive prior to the Council Meeting at stage 3. The Chair will normally acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 14 days, and will seek to arrange a mutually convenient date for the Appeals Panel. The Panel will normally consist of people chosen by the Chair from nominations from the Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies. The Chair will then normally write within 14 days of the Appeals Panel to formally advise of the Panel's decision.

## **Appendix 2: BCA's Disciplinary Procedure**

### **Please Note:**

- 1) Only the section relating to Award Holders is included here. The full document can be found on the BCA website.
- 2) The version below is the current version, including amendments agreed by BCA Council on 12<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Policy for Award Holders**

## General Principles:

- No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter in question has been investigated.
- At every stage individuals will have the opportunity to state their case, either themselves or through a representative.
- There is always a right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty and this appeal will be held by a panel that is independent of the original decision makers.

## Procedure

### A Potential Disciplinary Matter

Once it has become clear that an Award Holder (currently LCMLA, CIC or Anchor Installer) may have acted against BCA's interests, one or more of BCA Executive will be informed. Executive will then consult with the appropriate Officer (currently Training or Equipment & Techniques) to ascertain whether or not the matter may be related to the Award they hold. If the Officer is unavailable within an appropriate timescale, then Executive should consult with another experienced member of the Committee for judgement.

If the matter IS deemed to relate to the Award held, then this Policy should be followed. If not, then the individual will be treated according to the non-Award holder Policy.

BCA Executive will then appoint someone to carry out an initial investigation into the circumstances before deciding how to proceed. If it is felt that there may be a case to answer, then a full Investigatory Panel will normally follow. This will usually be the appropriate Standing Committee, National Council or Executive depending on the nature of the matter. However if the matter is sufficiently urgent, it will be dealt with by Executive following their normal Method of Working.

From the outset Executive will appoint a Chair of the Appeals Panel who must ensure they are not involved in any way in the Investigatory or Disciplinary Panel.

When the arrangements for the Investigatory Review have been finalised, the member will be written to at their last known address advising them of the complaint made against them, the time, date and location of Review, and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. A period of 30 days shall usually be given between this and the Review, although in some cases, particularly those relating to safety, this may be reduced.

Following the Review, the member will be written to again, usually within 14 days of the Review, outlining the outcome and giving the opportunity for appeal.

### Outcomes of an Investigatory Review

Each case should be considered individually with available outcomes including:

- clearing of any misconduct, potentially also including an apology to the member;
- words of advice;
- a verbal warning;
- a written warning;
- escalation to a Disciplinary Panel.

### Disciplinary Panel

Should either the initial investigation or the Investigatory Review conclude that available evidence is sufficiently robust and serious in nature, then a Disciplinary Panel should be convened. This will follow the same procedures as the Investigatory Panel, but the potential outcomes are more far reaching.

### Outcomes of a Disciplinary Panel

Each case should be considered individually with available outcomes including:

- clearing of any misconduct, potentially also including an apology to the member;
- words of advice;
- a verbal warning;

- a written warning;
- suspension of membership for an appropriate period;
- expulsion from BCA.

### **The Appeals Process**

An appeal will be dealt with by an Appeals Panel. This will be convened by the Chair of the Appeals Panel and will normally consist of people chosen by the Chair from nominations made by the Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies. None shall have been involved in the original investigation, Investigatory Review or Disciplinary Panel.

The Chair will seek to arrange a mutually convenient date and location for the Appeal, and then write to the individual formally advising them of the appeal and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. Until the Appeal the original disciplinary action will stand.

Following the appeal, the individual will be written to again outlining the outcome of the process. This will usually be within 14 days of the hearing.

### **Notes**

In the case of suspension of membership, this may also include the temporary removal of membership benefits, such as insurance.

When a decision involves removing or suspending an individual's leadership or instructing award, it is important to understand that this will probably have a serious impact on their professional well-being, quite likely including an immediate loss of income. This should be borne in mind as part of the decision-making process, but needs to be balanced against the need to maintain confidence in BCA's award schemes.