

Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 01 October 2016
at The Red Lion Inn, Alvechurch
(Final Draft)

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE):	BCA Chairman
Robin Weare (RW):	BCA Acting Treasurer
Simon Brooks (SJB):	BCA Secretary
Nigel Ball (NB):	BCA Training Officer
Andrew Hinde (AH):	BCA Cons. & Access Officer
Nick Williams (NW):	BCA Equip. & Tech. Officer
Bob Mehew (BM):	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Dave Tyson (DT):	CCC Rep.
Martell Baines (MB):	CNCC Rep.
Jenny Potts (JP):	DCA Rep.
David Jean (DJ):	DCUC Rep.
Stephan Natynczuk (SN):	ACI Rep.
Thomas Starnes (TS):	CHECC Rep.
John Hine (JH):	Club Rep.
Bernie Woodley:	Individual Member Rep.
David Cooke (DC):	Acting CSCC Rep & BCA Registry /IT W. Party Convenor
Tim Allen (TA):	BCA CRoW Liaison
Graham Mollard (GM):	Chair QMC
Stuart France	Observer
Leanne Barrett	BCA Clerical Assistant

The meeting commenced at 10:30am

1. Chairman's Welcome

AE welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly discussed the new appointments to the council.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Tony Radmall, Alan Finch, Steve Holding, Alan Butcher, Rostam Namaghi, Ged Campion, Peter Hall and Les Williams

3. Minutes of last Council Meeting on 05 June 2016 (previously circulated)

Proposal: Minutes from 05 June 2016 were accepted as a true and correct record.

Prop: RW Sec: BM *agreed unanimously*

4. Matters Arising for the Minutes of the last Council Meeting

Review of Action Log

Action 36 (Manual of Operations): Ongoing

ACTION: SJB to talk to Damian Weare in order to pick this item up and progress.

Action 83 (Produce Asset Register): Closed

Action 150 (Liaise with Joel Corrigan): Closed

Action 151 (Investigate Social Media) Ongoing

SJB confirmed there is no BCA social media policy. SJB and DC to look at the professional caver's social media policy as a starting point for developing a BCA policy. Hellie Brook's name to be removed from Social Media Working Party group. **ACTION:** LB/SJB

Action 155 (Update Account Signatories): Closed

Action 157 (Set up Auto-Enrolment Pension): Ongoing

RW confirmed will be completed by the due date April 2017.

Action 167 (TC to produce section for the Handbook on the Media): Closed

Action 172 (Text to express the benefits of caving for Government Bodies): Closed

TA – dealt with in previous report.

Action 174 (Liaise with Descent over 'infomercial' content): Ongoing

AE meeting with Chris Howes tomorrow to discuss advertising going forward. There will be an advert in each issue. RW confirmed the budget for the next year included £3000 for this. TA suggested BCA should try to get someone with a younger dynamic involved. AE open to suggestions. SJB put forward that the Descent Derbyshire correspondent may be a good option.

Action 175 (Advice to ACB): Closed

The draft was circulated to council after the AGM and subsequently approved by Executive. SJB confirmed that it was an oversight on his behalf as he had not realised it needed to be circulated to ACBs. **ACTION:** LB to circulate once received from SJB.

MB raised question of what was expected from Regional Councils as CNCC had only just received letter on ACBs. BM suggested – advice on impact / access control / understanding the position.

Action 176 (Training): Ongoing

The new training programme/qualifications were discussed at QMC. GM – expressed that there was no a good outline of what training incorporates. The new programme may bring in more memberships to BCA and piece on the new programme could be published in Descent to raise awareness. Such a piece/article would require approval of the executive before it could be used. **ACTION:** QMC

Action 177 (Data Protection & Collecting Data on Age): Ongoing

Discussion held prior to approving last meeting's minutes:

TA – Expressed the view that there was no factual evidence that BCA membership aging but the number of active cavers is reducing and there is a potential rapid drop off in membership. Without knowing the age profile of members there is little opportunity to do anything about it. This has various implications for BCA.

Council discussed options of collecting just the year of birth or asking members to clarify which age bracket they fit into. It was noted that BCA need to find practical way of collecting data and age bands will probably be easiest. NW had already flagged this with the Glenn Jones. SJB to liaise with Membership Administrator and look at way forward. **ACTION:** SJB

Action 178 (Printing Conservation Code on reverse of membership card): Closed

AH confirmed it isn't possible as there isn't enough space.

5. Chairman's Report: Andy Eavis

I must start my chairman's report with mentioning Euro Speleo. This, in my opinion was fantastically successful. I have not heard a single negative report from anybody and I have heard an awful lot of positive reports. The weather, although bad for the last couple of days could have been much worse, and indeed the first few days, the weather was fantastic. We just about got away with the British climate. Very great thanks to everybody involved, there were some people who want mentioning in particular. The number one unsung hero was Damian Weare who worked continuously from before it started until well after it finished. Anybody who had anything to do with Euro Speleo owes Damian a huge debt of gratitude. Also of course great thanks to Les and Wendy and their teams. It all came together in the end, and Les' Hidden Earth on steroids was Hidden Earth on heroin – well done everybody.

Since the AGM, a lot has happened, we have two of the executive positions being filled by new people. Robin Weare now takes over fully his role of Treasurer and as his report indicates, he is now tackling the task with vigour, and I am looking forward to the financial year ahead.

Similarly, Simon Brooks has taken on the role of Secretary, taking on a post where it will be difficult to emulate its predecessor. However, I am sure Simon with the help of his new Clerical Assistant Leanne Barrett will take this forward with even more professionalism than in the past.

Nigel Ball and Graham Mollard are tackling changes in training, which long term I think will rationalise the situation and sort out the financial deficits in training, access for people who want to train and the differences between professional training and recreational caving.

CRoW under Tim Allen's guise is continuing hand in hand with Conservation and Access under Andrew Hinde. I am pleased they are working together and ably assisted by Bob Mehew who has produced a number of new leaflets both published and in the pipeline. The conservation message is growing in volume, and as promised at the AGM we are pushing conservation as much as rationalisation of access.

There have been a number of meetings between BCA executives and the Showcave Association, again, in connection with access both with existing cave entrances and new cave entrances that might be opened up in the future. This in conjunction with work by Nick Williams on insurance, is I think going to reap good rewards for the future.

Finally, I cannot hide the fact that there is an enormous amount of work to do. I thank everybody who is doing it at the moment and encourage them to continue in the same way into the future.

Many thanks to all of the BCA Council.

TA questioned the nature of the further meetings with the Showcave Association and the joint statement as he has had a number of people coming up to him wondering why we are doing work for an association of commercial business when BCA are a voluntary organisation that struggles to do work for its own members (leaflets for bodies for example) yet is producing stuff for people who aren't members. AE clarified that the BCA leaflets aren't advertising Showcaves and the purpose of the leaflets is to promote the BCA try and get members/involvement of people who visit showcaves.

6. Secretary's Report: Simon Brooks

Since appointment at the AGM in June 2016 my time has been limited so focus has been on familiarising myself with Secretarial processes and BCA Procedures (still some way to go) and assisting with the appointment of BCA Clerical Assistant.

JP requested an excel file that included everyone on the council, their positions and contact information.

AE confirmed he has a recent copy that is nearly up to date.

DC will check that Hellie's name is off the council email list.

ACTION 179 (Circulation of updated council membership list)

SJB/LB to update and circulate council membership list. **ACTION:** SJB/LB

7. Treasurer's Report: Robin Weare

***Bank Mandates** – One thing I've learned since my appointment it is that the administrative effort required to change the signatories on a bank account is immense. As part of that exercise I've learned how to multi task whilst hanging onto the telephone when waiting in a bank helpline queue.*

Happily, I can report that the HSBC mandates have been changed in accordance with the resolution at the June meeting.

We are still struggling with the mandate for the Barclays account – although I am now able to access it online.

I must also report that when I was added as an online “signatory” I found that HSBC’s online payment system operates with only one “signature”. Research has established that when the online payment facility was set up in January 2011 a resolution was passed by Council which reads

The National Council confirms that the HSBC Accounts (Main, No. 1 and Training), NatWest (Subscriptions), Standard Life (Reserve) and PayPal accounts be Internet accounts. The following controls are to be observed:

- 1) No payments are to be authorised by the Treasurer alone.*
- 2) Members of the Executive shall be able to view up-to-date account statements at any time.*
- 3) That the maximum combined daily payment limit on each HSBC account be £3,000.*
- 4) That balances above £1,000 in the Subscriptions and PayPal account are transferred to the main account.*
- 5) That withdrawals from the Reserve Account can only be made into the main account.*
- 6) That written instructions require two signatures*
- 7) Account Statements are sent to BCA’s official address.*

Save that the Natwest account has now been closed and the Reserve account is with Barclays that resolution still applies. I have dealt with item 1) by obtaining the e-mailed approval of another account signatory before making a BACS payment.

Tax Returns – *The corporation tax return in respect of 2015 has been completed and submitted to HMRC. There is no liability.*

Asset Register – *I inherited a part completed task which falls into two sections. The first is to produce a register of the assets of BCA – that is now complete and I consider the action point to be closed. The connected task is to generate a list of items insured under the joint BCA/BCRA/Hidden Earth policy. That is now complete in general terms in that I have up to date estimates of the replacement costs of all items covered. As the individual assets of BCRA and Hidden Earth are not the concern of the BCA Treasurer I consider that aspect of the action point to be closed.*

Regional Council Claims for 2015 – *As a onetime Regional Council Treasurer I know how frustrating it can be to have to wait until the latter end of the next year for reimbursement. I am now beginning to understand how difficult it is for the BCA Treasurer to find the time to start the process, which itself is lengthy and somewhat cumbersome. I had hoped that it would have been completed by now. I now hope to start it very soon.*

Staff Pensions – *Also on the agenda for the final quarter is to finalise the planning for the staff pension scheme we are required to have in place by 31st March 2017. The basic research has already been carried out in conjunction with Paul & Nick.*

Budgets & Subscriptions – *This is the meeting at which Council normally considers the budget and sets subscription levels for the coming year.*

As I pointed out at the June meeting I see it as unlikely that the outcome for 2016 will be in accordance with the original budget. This is partly because Council has regularly authorised additional expenditure and partly because the assumption that professional training would break even was unrealistic.

Expenditure of £1,000 for promoting the new Caving Code and the Minimum Impact Guidelines leaflets was authorised at the April meeting. The actual expenditure was £974.22 for the Caving Code coasters and £488.11 for the Minimum Impact leaflets and I ask Council to authorise the overspend.

It is expected that there will be a deficit on the Eurospeleo event but it appears likely that it will be less than once feared. Against that I anticipate savings in other areas and still hope that the outcome will be to break even.

2017

Based upon existing membership numbers and subscription levels and taking into account

- a) the changes to expenditure I expect*
- b) an allowance for expenditure I don't expect*
- c) the cost of the ballot which will follow a review of the constitution*
- d) the normal subsidies to expeditions and the library*

and accepting that the planned changes to the pricing structures will allow professional caving to break even I see the outcome for 2017 as a deficit of £5-10,000.

Subscription levels - *I've spent some time trawling the minutes in order to identify the movements in subscriptions over the years. I cannot claim absolute certainty but it appears that the basic rate (ie for a CIM caver) was originally set at £15 and increased to £16 in 2008 and to £17 in 2012. The rates for clubs, students and under 18s have never changed. The subscription for non caving members was not increased in 2008 but rose by £1 to £6 in 2012. My memory tells me that at the outset there was an additional charge of £100 each for access controllers and clubs with huts which is now limited to a total addition of £50 for either or both.*

Realising that Council may wish to consider an increase in subscription levels I give this information as background. As further background I will add that a £1 increase for CIM & DIM Caving members would raise about £4,500. A £1 increase for all individual members would raise about £6,000. An increase of £10 at each level of club subscriptions would raise about £1,700 and an increase of £10 in the extra paid by clubs with huts or controlling access would cover the £300 additional annual cost of the specific extension to employers' liability insurance taken on this year.

RW confirmed making progress with the bank mandates and is waiting on Barclays to confirm theirs has been completed. Wanted to bring to the council's attention that their online system is not dual signatory but we don't want to change bank. He will therefore ensure that transactions are authorised by another signatory (or email other members of the Exec that proposing to make the payment) and waiting for a response before the transaction is set up.

RW confirmed there is no tax liability and that the asset register is essentially complete. The basic work has been done on staff pensions. 2016 is expected to be worse than budget for the reasons set out in the written report. A small deficit is expected on Euro Speleo.

Sought retrospective authorisation for the overspend on the caving code and minimum impact guidelines publications. They had been budgeted at £1,000 but the actual cost was around £1,400.

Prop: NW Sec: JP unanimously agreed

RW discussed next year's budget: Public Liability insurance is on a 2 year agreement so will be the same unless insurance tax is increased. Bank interest rates are falling so allowance has been made for a 50% fall in interest receivable. Allowance has been made for the subscription to UIS, the cost of the ballot for constitutional changes and continued advertising in Descent. With proposals to ensure that Training at least breaks even on the table he has included Training as breaking even. He anticipates that savings will be made on meetings through using Webex.

Council discussed options for increasing subscription costs to ensure break even and allow for any insurance premium rise.

NW was concerned that with the end of the PL insurance agreement there may be a need to raise subscriptions next year. RW agreed and felt we should defer an increase for individual members until the next insurance round. We have sufficient reserves to cover a deficit in 2017. He would prefer to increase club costs this year especially as they have the benefit of the increased cover taken on during 2016.

RW proposed an increase for clubs next year ranging from £5 at the lower end and £20 at the higher end.

MB asked whether decisions on raising subscriptions could be made earlier in the year.

NW confirmed this was the meeting at which subscriptions had traditionally been considered.

RW felt that it was not practical to consider next year's budget at the meeting which followed the AGM and that this was the earliest meeting at which subscriptions could be considered. It was proposed that for 2017 subscriptions be:

Unchanged for individuals and that Club subscriptions are set at

up to 10 members £25 (from £20)
11 - 20 members £35 (from £30)
21 - 30 members £50 (from £40)
31 - 40 members £60 (from £45)
41+ members £70 (from £50)

Access Controllers/Accommodation providers £60 (from £50)

Access Controllers £60 (from £50)

Associates £55 (from £45)

Prop: RW Sec: NW Unanimously approved

AH raised the question of if the reserve pot is purely for insurance loss. RW sees it as covering 2 years expenditure with further clarification from NW that it should be around 4x the insurance cost to cope with a doubling in insurance.

DC told council that the insurance pot is set at around £80k and the rest of the reserve sits in another pot, which was originally intended to be one year's turnover.

ACTION 180 (Mention of revised fees in Newsletter)

AE asked that the newsletter will mention increase in fees. RW agreed to do so. **ACTION:** RW

8. Conservation & Access: Andrew Hinde

European Cave Protection Symposium – This well attended event took place during the Eurospeleo Congress in August 2016. The theme for presentations and workshops was “Cave Protection under EU Law” and featured some of the many Cave Monitoring procedures used across European karst areas.

British Delegates were major contributors and made useful contributions in spite of the “Brexit” dilemma. They also made useful connections with their European counterparts.

The symposium concluded with a Biological Monitoring Field Trip to Scoska Cave. This was probably the most productive element of the symposium and generated a good Q&A session with some of the leading Biospeleologists in Europe.

An Education Strategy for the Conservation of Caves – The C&A committee have prepared an Education Strategy for the Conservation of Caves. Please note that this is NOT a policy document with details. It is more of a road map showing our proposed direction of travel. It is for BCA guidance. Eventually we hope to have guidance prepared for use by Clubs and Constituent Bodies should they wish to take advantage of it.

Cave Conservation Code – The new 6 point Cave Conservation Code has been printed on full colour “coasters” and distributed at Eurospeleo. 2050 units were printed at a cost of £974. Any re print will be at a cost of 35p per unit.

Minimal Impact Caving Guidelines – A print run of 2000 leaflets and 250 posters was produced at a cost of £488. Distribution of the pdf version has had modest success.

AH read statement / strategy to council for it to be approved so other councils can be made aware of it. AE and AH confirmed no negative feedback from previous circulation.

An educational strategy for the conservation of caves.

The British Caving Association believe that the most effective long term means of conserving caves is through education.

The BCA will produce material, such as the Minimal Impact Caving Guidelines and 6 Point Caving Code, in a variety of formats and make it widely available to their membership and beyond. The BCA will encourage all membership groups, constituent bodies, clubs and individuals, to strengthen their conservation message.

Whilst education is a key issue, the BCA also support conservation monitoring schemes such as the SSSI Monitoring Projects, and conservation management, such as route marking, signage and conservation wardens. In this respect, the BCA recommends adopting a guiding principle of the least restrictive option to meet the conservation need. We also acknowledge the value of Cave Management Plans and Conservation Audits.

Ideally all people visiting a cave should hear a conservation message. The primary focus should be on those new to the activity but the message should also be used as a reminder to those who are more regularly engaged with caving activities. The BCA believe there are Four main ways to deliver a conservation message:

- *Through caving clubs. Many cavers are members of caving clubs or have contact with them. The club has an ideal opportunity to pass on conservation messages. Some clubs nominate a 'conservation officer' for this purpose and BCA encourage clubs to consider this.*
- *Through caving instructors. Many people are introduced to caving through an instructed caving trip. The cave instructor training and assessment scheme requires conservation briefings to be delivered and other conservation considerations to be met as part of trip planning.*
- *At the cave and in the caving area. Some people with an interest in visiting caves will not be instructed or contacted by a club. These may be experienced cavers or relative novices. Regional Caving Councils are encouraged to play a role ensuring the message is available in local shops, cafes, events and even at the cave itself where this is appropriate.*
- *Online via Websites and Social Media platforms.*

Please contact the BCA Conservation and Access Officer for further information.

Prop: TA Sec: JP Unanimously agreed

ACTION 181 (Access and Conservation Items for Descent)

GM has an access and conservation document for professional cavers which he will send to AH to see if agrees / can combine the two together. Discussion held over how to move forward with clubs and their members and where the statement should be published. AH to get something together with photographs as possible editorial in Descent to show BCA are behind conservation. **ACTION:** AH

9. Equipment & Techniques Officer: Nick Williams

The anchor puller has been deployed to Mendip to test some new anchors, though there are doubts as to whether the anchor design (which incorporates a weld) is suitably resistant to chloride stress corrosion cracking.

An order for some special corrosion resistant anchors for testing at a sea side location in Devon remains unfulfilled. This is not the first time a lack of response has been experienced and reinforces a desire to find a more dependable supplier.

The guidance to users of anchors is being reviewed following some helpful comments by Chris Howes.

Rope Test Officer: Bob Mehew

The tensile / static test rig has been extended to take samples over 1m in length, fitted with a hydraulic electric pump and pressure sensor and safety shields and is now located at the Bradford Pothole Club's garage alongside the instrumented rope test rig. (The rig awaits being bolted down to the floor after creating a level concrete base.) Thanks go to the BPC for hosting this piece of kit. The first piece of work using the rig was conducted on testing digging buckets and rock nets. That indicated they were capable of taking over 500kg (half a

tonne) being well over ten times that which could be stored within the digging bucket (circa 50kg). The rock net eventually gave way at 2,200kg. A subsequent test indicated that the rope attachment system could be improved.

The mobile Rope Test Rig was operated at Euro Speleo 2016 for some of the days when the weather was clement and some 30 samples were tested. The instrumented rope and tensile test rigs were also demonstrated on a field trip to the Bradford Pothole Club. A lecture was also given at the Congress on the first results from the instrumented test rig. These suggest that ropes of a given diameter can differ in dynamic breaking strength by significant amounts (a difference of 25% was observed between two rope manufacturers). The lecture can be viewed at the rope research web site (<http://www.roperesearch.co.uk>).

A request for a budget of £500 in 2017 for purchasing new rope to test will be made to the next meeting of E&T.

TA asked why £500 was needed for new rope. BM clarified they can use £200 worth in one day, need different types of rope within a large range of parameters which is why a considerable quantity of rope is consumed. JP raised possibility of clubs donating a length for testing if buying new rope.

RW confirmed it is within budget so doesn't need council approval.

10. Training Officer: Nigel Ball

Since May 2016 to the end of July 2016, the following data shows how the Local Cave and Mine Leader Award scheme, (LCLMA) and the Cave Instructor Certificate scheme (CIC) has been progressing.

LCML registrations	40	
LCML Level 1 assessments	4	
LCML Level 2 assessments	2	
LCML Level 1 revalidations	12	
LCML Level 2 revalidations	3	
LCML Level 1 Core Skills Reassessments (CSR)	1	
LCML Level 2 core Skills Reassessments (CSR)	0	
CIC registrations	6	
CIC assessments	1	
CIC revalidations	7	
Active CIC holders	80	
Active LCML Level 1 holders		463
Active LCML Level 2 holders		266

Numbers do fluctuate somewhat during the year but currently they are down a bit for Level 1 and fairly consistent for Level 2. At CIC Level the numbers are down a little from last year but they are consistent back to 2012.

Regional Council's reports to Training Committee. – DCA – nothing to report.

CNCC – Tim Allan is working to resolve access for both recreational and professional cavers on Casterton Fell, Leck Fell and The Allotment.

CCC – no person attended so there was no report.

Application for Training Grants. – CSCC planned to run a training course on 18th and 19th June. Chris Binding is raising the awareness of training grants for recreational training courses.

NB confirmed the report is mainly about the professional side of things and that the numbers are fairly static.

GM had itemised what has happened since coming on board. The draft Disciplinary procedure is in BM's hands to look at, as is the draft contract for use by professional cavers when dealing with the media. New trainer assessor agreements are in place with a requirement that they are members of the BCA. There is a plan for all trainees and all holders of BCA qualification to be required to be members. Work is going on with the digital handbook.

GM told council he has had a meeting with CSCC Chair Alan Butcher recently to discuss what recreational cavers want from professional cavers. He felt that the response was quite positive and they are wanting material / downloads and a training officer as a point of contact who will operate the grant scheme and provide resources.

NW advised council there is an online web based database package used by similar bodies that deals with training. There has been a presentation from the vendor which demonstrated the level of retention from mountain leader training: before they were retaining around 400 members but now around 3,000. The price is within the budget previously agreed and there is a need to move forward with it.

DC questioned the contract and that it should be run past someone who is used to buying software. NW confirmed has seen the contract and will send to DC for further review. GM confirmed that we can retrieve our data when wanted. NW told council that we will have a period where we have the package to work with and can then review in 3 and 12 months and exit the contract if necessary. It doesn't integrate with our current systems.

TA advised council he has been involved with land owners in the Dales concerning the use of their land by professional cavers. Before he was involved with BCA there were access issues with professional cavers – some action was taken within BCA that if some certificate holders were reported as caving outside of access agreements then certification would be withdrawn. TA asked what the situation is with this.

GM confirmed the new trainer and assessor agreement requires compliance with all access agreement when working professionally but that certification wouldn't be withdrawn for a holder who is on a recreational caving trip with friends. BM further clarified that if they went commercially there would be a case for disciplinary action, but if it was a private trip with no commercial aspect then no action could be taken against them.

[Post-Meeting note: An extensive review of past minutes failed to establish that the proposed purchase of a database package had been authorised or that a budget had been set. Accordingly, the proposal is being reviewed by Executive who will either give the necessary authorisation or defer a decision until the January Council meeting]

11. Publications & Information Officer: David Cooke

Website

There is little to report this quarter since most of my spare time has been devoted to helping with the Euro Speleo Congress.

I received a request to create an enquiries@... email forward which I turned down on the practical grounds that there is no single person in BCA whose roll it is to deal with the wide range of enquiries about BCA that the email address implies. Once I discovered more about the reason behind the request I proposed the more targeted trycaving@... which can be dealt with by a single person and mentioned that the membership@... forwarder already exists. As noted on the website the catch all email address for general enquiries is secretary@...

Web Services

Since the last meeting two members have purchased new hosting accounts. The BCA Web Server has suffered a total of 20 minutes unscheduled outage in 2 incidents, giving an up time better of better than 99.98%.

The security certificate market is undergoing a quiet revolution and as a consequence I soon expect to be offering BCA hosted websites a free SSL certificate, making an excellent web hosting deal even more compelling.

The general work of keeping the web server up and running, supporting the clubs and organisations that we host and doing the financial book keeping continues quietly in the background.

Cave Registry

I'm pleased to be able to report that the Peak District Cave Registry and Access Guide is now available on the DCA's website. The guide has been collated from the late John Beck's Peak District Cave Registry in combination with the access information and rigging diagrams from the DCA Peak District Access and Rigging Guide.

It uses the same software that Matt Voysey developed for the Mendip Cave Registry and Archive and has been adapted for DCA's requirements. Wayne Sheldon prepared the data for the guide with assistance from Angus Sawyer.

IT Working Party

I have held some meetings and discussions with the relevant people regarding enhancing the Membership System. The next steps have been agreed. My aim is to improve the software to make the processing more efficient within the existing membership structure. Any future change to the membership structure would be accommodated when and if it happened.

DC had nothing to add to Webmaster's report.

Newsletter Editor's Report - The last newsletter was distributed at the end of June as an e-mail attachment to those registered to receive it and it appeared on the BCA website at the same time.

The necessary reformatting and publication on the website had previously been done by Damian, and it is only now that I've had to spend more than a whole day doing that task myself that I realise how grateful I should have been to him.

I also record my sincere gratitude to Cookie who responded almost instantly to my desperate plea for help when a near disaster arose during the process.

I'm hoping to finalise the next newsletter during the third weekend of October and would ask for contributions to reach me by Thursday 20th.

RW had nothing to add on Newsletter Editor's report but commented that desperate for content so if have anything 20th October is the cut off.

Handbook Editor to be removed from further agendas.

12. Legal & Insurance Officer: Bob Mehew

Trustees - One club approached me with a question about the insurance cover for their trustees. The question arose in respect of their hut insurance policy which was in the name of the club committee. As their Constitution did not specifically include the trustees as members of the committee and the club was unincorporated, it was clear that there was a potential gap. A note was sent to other clubs with huts advising them of this possible gap. The BCA PL insurance policy automatically covers trustees, all club officials as well as committee members.

BM had nothing to add on part on trustees.

NW confirmed that the policy covers trustees and that BCRA trustees are covered under the BCA policy if using that policy.

13. Youth & Development Officer

TS on behalf of Rostam Namaghi

Main thing working on is drafting university caving club handbook with best practice and guidance on how to run a University Caving Club. It should be available before forum in November for wider reading and TS would appreciate input from other BCA members / experienced cavers.

TS to email the draft handbook to GM who will correlate replies.

CHECC expecting about 200 delegates from University Caving Clubs to the Northern regional CHECC 25th – 27th November. The event has been sponsored by various caving organisations.

TA stated that best practice handbook had been written to a stage they were comfortable with. More experienced cavers are looking at it, not to re-write, but to point out anything missed / incorrect. CHECC should be left to run their own business.

TS – University clubs do things their own way, as long as they're being safe. Document only has 1 chapter about training. Looks at how to attract freshers and deal with student unions.

Document to be circulated for comment to ensure best practices are in line with one another.

14. Membership Administrator's Report

Report from Glenn Jones.

DIMs 508 (caving), 44 (non-caving), 2 (CIM Plus), 7 (BCRA Honorary), (includes 276 BCRA members and 26 student members) (Total DIM's = 561)

CIMs 3973 (caving), 871 (non-caving), 501 student / U18) (Total CIM's = 5345)

Clubs: 173 Associates:2 Access Bodies: 8

***New Groups:** : The following Group(s) have supplied the correct paperwork and payment in order to become BCA Group members: Gwent Caving Club*

Gwent Caving Club required approval.

Prop: DT

Sec: RW

Unanimously Approved.

15. Insurance Manager's Report: Nick Williams

The Legal & Insurance Officer has agreed that the Insurance Manager would continue to lead on insurance matters and where needed he would work with or through him.

NW confirmed that he is due another meeting with the insurer in December, prior to renewal and requested any suggestion for changes or clarifications should be fed to him as soon as possible so it can be raised in that meeting. NW advised he has had discussions with Perkins Slade as they would like us to take some more action as a community regarding risk assessment – to think about what we do before doing it. NW has had several discussions with BM about what it means and they are still discussing this but it will require action from clubs and regional councils; for example to be part of normal business and recorded in minutes. Showing we have done prior risk assessments and discussed issues would be hugely helpful if we ever needed to defend an action in court. Some activities are covered (eg. use of explosives / diving) but things such as use of winches by some member clubs may need some work. NW said the participation statement establishes ground rules / expectations of person going caving but we need to give this statement more prominence on the website and in other publications.

NW went on to say that help will be provided to clubs but keen not to turn it into an exercise in its own right and to keep it proportionate so as not to devalue the insurance. A risk assessment for each cave is not expected - similar ones could be treated in the same manner.

TA advised he attended the first meeting with the insurer and had a difference of opinion with BM; he thinks we need to be cautious about the language we use and should not over complicate what is required. TA said that concerns have been raised within CNCC about liability and before anything else is sent out we should make sure it is agreed and the language is appropriate. BM went on to clarify his position on the insurance which is different to H&S at work. He has written a 16 page document which broker has advised is too lengthy and is working on reducing it with the help of NW. BM said there is work to be done by access controlling bodies which could mean a lot of work for some bodies. He added that there is a considerable difference between a cave in a residential area and one in the middle of nowhere.

NW clarified that the documents on the website for insurance are correct and there is no concern that we're currently covered – just need to ensure maintain cover / no successful claim made against us.

ACTION 182 16. Radon Working Party Convenor's Report

No longer required. To be removed from further agendas.: SJB/ **ACTION** LB

17. Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report

No further comments

18. British Caving Library Report: Jenny Potts

Eurospeleo 2016 – The British Caving Library (BCL) had a stand at Eurospeleo2016 and took over £400 in donations for our “Lucky Dip” of unwanted duplicate journals and books. Both UK and foreign publications were snapped up and we successfully “recycled” about 13 archive boxes full. We were pleased to receive a number of new publications donated to us and we used some of our “takings” to buy new books. Myself and the Librarian Mary Wilde, (who was at the stand for part of the time), were able to use the site’s WiFi to answer participants’ enquiries by linking to BCL’s Online Catalogue.

The John Beck / Doug Nash legacy – We are in the final stages of incorporating the legacy into the Library holdings, which has meant buying and installing extra shelving to enable this to be done. We hope to complete the move of the last of the publications, surveys and archive material from the storage facility to BCL by mid-October.

The Library Website, etc. – Thanks to the efforts of John Gardner, the Library website now has a number of new Audio Archive recordings for you to listen to and the C.R.O. archive has now been placed on the BCRA Online Archive, where it is available to everyone. We now have a presence on UKcaving.com and our Facebook page now has over 800 followers.

BCL in the BCRA Annual Review – The new BCRA Annual Review, due out on 22nd. October, contains a detailed report on the history and progress of the British Caving Library since it came into being, taking over from the former BCRA Library in 2009.

No further comments.

19. Child Protection Officer (Acting)

BM – no reports

DT questioned if the guidelines have changed since 2011, as Sport Wales have questioned when last updated.

BM confirmed policy still the same. It does take into account the Protection of Freedoms Act.

20. Crow-Liaison Officer Report: Tim Allen

I was sorry to have missed the AGM and following council meeting to hear first-hand the discussions related to CRoW. I have read the draft minutes of those meetings and the following motion and comments:

“To remit the issue of section 4.6 of the constitution to council for consideration to return with a properly worded proposal presented at the next general meeting. Meanwhile BCA will concentrate on conservation and landowner relations.”

And from the chairman, "To be clear, TA will not stop his work on CRoW completely, but will change his key focus."

I look forward to gaining a better understanding of what this means.

***Conservation and landowner relations** – The CRoW debate over caving has been good for cave conservation and it has been no surprise to me that improvements in access and conservation have run hand in hand and since the outset I have assisted the C&A officer and committee as much as I can. BCA C&A activity has been re-invigorated by CRoW in a very positive manner. The Minimal Impact Guidance, the 6 Point Code and now an educational strategy on conservation combined are all a positive leap forward. As a National Association we can now aim towards the simple objective that every person visiting a cave should hear a conservation message – and then more. CRoW has encouraged many in our regions to be seen to be doing more and many modern cavers want to be more conservation minded and BCA C&A is putting in place the tools to fulfil that desire.*

Having landowners on board is key to any form of recreational access and I have been working on this since the outset of the campaign. In the north where I have access to landowners I have been pro-active with the local authorities, tourism officers, LAF's, other recreational bodies and individual landowners themselves – all in a respectful and courteous manner and with nothing but progress to report. It is widely believed that the problems which were anticipated before the CRoW Act was introduced never materialised and that generally speaking landowners are content with the legislation and this is exactly how I have found the situation related to caving.

***Recent efforts** – With the outcome of the AGM to be made clear and our political system in turmoil for much of the summer very little campaigning has taken place since May. However, some new supporters of the campaign have come forward following my efforts earlier in the Spring. So we now have a well-respected organisation involved with National Parks and a senior member of the House of Lords to add to our list.*

I also wrote a report to the exec intended to answer the question of whether the BCA has fulfilled any obligation it has in connection with the later part of point number two of the BCA poll on CRoW, namely, "To consult with landowners and open communication with the Country Land and Business Association."

Statement read by TA to outlines his views

A discussion was held following this about the feeling of the meeting from AGM and criticism received by TA. Council voiced their support for TA and that when defence is needed they will come forward. JP said that initial objections were in terms of it being a licence to wreck caves, which is not the case and that the way to save them is to monitor them and look after them, not put a gate on them.

RW stated that at AGM two resolutions were passed which effectively said the BCA needs to change the constitution to carry on doing what it has been doing.

ACTION 183 (Proposed motion Ref S46)

TA will have a properly worded proposal to next GM of the motion to remit issue of S46 to council for consideration. **ACTION:** TA

GM confirmed that TA had been in touch and spoken about access and conservation and as far as professional cavers go they are in support of anything to enhance access for all cavers, including professional and offered any assistance.

TA has been invited to join a panel of sports and recreation alliance and will be there as BCA's CRoW liaison officer and will report anything back to council.

21. International UIS Report: Andy Eavis

The main thing that has happened on the international scene is Euro Speleo where the bureau of International Union of Speleology had their annual meeting. The meeting went very well and they were very complimentary about the facilities provided and the conference in general. They had two days of fairly intense meetings with the entire bureau of the UIS attending. It is very unusual for everybody to be present at any of these meetings, it could certainly be considered a great success.

The main topic of discussion was the International Congress in Sydney next July. The two representatives from Australia reported that things were going pretty well and most things were on schedule.

Agreements between the European Federation of the UIS and the Central American Federation were approved and signed and reference made to the newly formed Asian Federation.

The liaison between UIS and ISCA, the International Caves Association was also discussed with a number of ISCA members present at the conference. This uneasy relationship is continuing with an understanding between both organisations. Overall, the bureau of the UIS thought Euro Speleo a great success

AE – first time everyone attended. Nothing from Ged and nothing more to add.

22. Any Other Business

BM – Plans for constitutional amendments.

TA suggested that set up small working group to come up with suggestions as this has worked well with CNCC.

BM said need a decent draft in January so people can reference back to bodies and come to March meeting with how well it has been reacted to and will go a long way to disarming any complaints.

ACTION 184 (Constitutional Amendments)

AE this will be dealt with by the Executive with the assistance of Damian and proposals would be ready in time for the next Council meeting. **ACTION:** Executive and DW

BM - Leaflets

BM had included in his reports to Council one on producing leaflets, which had been omitted from the published reports. SJB apologised for the omission. BM said he had made a suggestion soon after the AGM to the Executive about the production of a range of leaflets under the following titles:

a) A member of the public wants to go caving

- b) A member of the public wants to go caving based on a show cave experience
- c) A message to cavers on conservation
- d) A message to the members of the public on conservation
- e) A message to diggers
- f) A 'New Members' pack

The Try Caving work covered item a) but from responses he had received it appears few paper leaflets are left available. He had also been advised that a volunteer had been found to update the Try Caving web site.

ACTION 185 (Caving/BCA Leaflets for Show Caves)

The Executive had agreed with the production of a leaflet for members of the public at a show cave re item b). The leaflet had been produced with the help of Jerry Wooldridge and a number of photographers, it was for use in show caves and aimed at members of the public who expressed an interest. BM offered to email a copy of the leaflet to Council members who asked to see the leaflet. It had been well received and plans were in hand to reprint the leaflet for next year's season. **ACTION: BM**

Item c) had been covered by AH's work on the Minimum Impact Caving Guidelines and the 6 point code.

BM indicated he had had second thoughts on item d) wondering if a leaflet for the public about cave conservation was of likely benefit.

BM noted in respect of item e) that two regions had produced leaflets on digging and indicated the idea had been welcomed by people he had discussed it with. One point he noted was the two existing leaflets could be viewed as focused on digging sites in SSSIs whereas he wanted one which covered all locations. The other point was that both leaflets omitted one or two points that the other had included so a more comprehensive leaflet should be produced, including an emphasis on clearing up on abandonment. He would have appended to the minutes his list of bullet points for a leaflet and sought comments and additions by members for improving the leaflet.

BM had obtained the agreement of the Executive to poll member clubs to see if a new members pack would be used. Of the 184 email addresses provided, 8 bounced. Of the 176 presumed to have got through, 66 / 36% replied. Of the 66 who replied, 79% replied positively, 9% indicated reservations about issuing paper based versions and 12% said no. It therefore seems worthwhile going ahead with producing a range of material for issue in electronic form to new (and possibly existing) members. Ideas for the material consists of:

- The participation statement
- Minimal Impact Caving Guidelines
- Training advice (under preliminary consideration by Training Committee)

And he sought suggestions for other material for inclusion.

ACTION 186 (Additional BCA Information Leaflets)

BM was not suggesting that BCA produce paper leaflets, rather to provide web based information which could be downloaded and printed if people wanted to; meaning the expense should be minimal.

ACTION: BM to progress

MB – CNCC Committee

Opportunity for individual caving representative to be on CNCC committee – would BCA communicate that through the newsletter.

ACTION 187 (Individual Caving Rep for CNCC)

RW confirmed this had already been in a newsletter once but he will also put it into the next one.

ACTION: RW

AH – Direct Communication

Getting people to give email address with prizes etc. Opportunity with renewals coming up – possible discounted membership scheme for those who allow for direct communication by email.

AE – People who have already given email address haven't received any prize draws or discount. Something in constitutional changes could be considered.

ACTION 188 (Incentive for submission of email address)

RW confirmed that this would be considered as part of the constitutional change agenda. **ACTION:** Executive

23. Date, Time & Place of next meeting – 07 January 2017, 10:30am, The Red Lion Inn, Alvechurch

Meeting closed at 15:02

APPENDIX A

BCA Digging leaflet would be of value based on those issued by CNCC & DCA but also including a clear message about clearing up on abandonment. A draft outline of the content is as follows:

- Background info Archaeology, Cave, Cave life, Conservation, Organisations & contact details, SAMs, Science, SSSI
- Applied above or below surface
- Sort out all interested parties
- Research previous work

Work out digging operation techniques, spoil heap location & subsequent cover, possible impact of digging (cf draft, water flow, bats, sediments, passage detail, control of muddy clothing), control of access of both people and animals (cf cattle, bats)

- Establish if legal controls exist (SSSI, SAM, bats, baggers, etc.)
- Seek permission from all interested parties, including obtaining legal consents
- Monitoring impact of dig in progress
- Program of review of progress including continuing commitment

- What to do when the dig goes
- Clean up when breakthrough or abandon dig
- Note if dig without legal consents will be in breach of the law

DRAFT