

OCTOBER 7, 2017



DRAFT



## COUNCIL MINUTES

RED LION HOTEL

B48 7LG

## PRESENT

A Eavis	AE	Chair
Robin Weare	RW	BCA Acting Treasurer
Nick Williams	NW	BCA Acting Secretary
Nigel Atkins	NA	BCA Acting Training Officer
Andrew Hinde	AH	BCA Cons. & Access Officer
Les Williams	LesW	BCA Publ. & Info. Off
Stuart France	SF	CCC Rep.
Linda Wilson	LW	CSCC Rep.
Jenny Potts	JP	DCA Rep.
David Jean	DJ	DCUC Rep.
Richard Vooght	RV	WPCST Rep.
Stephan Natynczuk	SN	ACI Rep.
Tony Radmall (Badger)	TR	ASCT Rep.
Steve Holding	SH	NAMHO Rep.
David Cooke	DC	Club Rep. 1 BCA Registry& ITWP Convenor
Bernie Woodley	BW	Club Rep. 2
Idris Williams	IW	Club Rep. 3
John Hine	JH	Club Rep. 4
Mark Richardson	MR	DIM/CIM Rep.1
Tim Allen	TA	BCA CRoW Liaison
Graham Mollard	GM	QMC Chair
Wendy Williams	WW	BCA Membership Administrator
Claire Peacey	CP	Clerical Assistant

The meeting commenced at 10.46

### 1. Chairman's Welcome

AE welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room.

### 2. Apologies

Rostam Namaghi, John Gunn, Ged Champion, Will Whalley, Matthew Wire, Pete Hall.

### 3. Items for Any Other Business

AE requested items for Any Other Business be stated. None were stated.

### 4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on June 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 - circulated

No disputes arose, all true requested by AE.

**Proposed: RW:** All true.

**Seconded: IW**

### 5. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Last Council Meeting

AE went through Action Log from last Council Meeting. For the following actions, AE lead comment, followed by group consensus, to discuss under relevant report later in Agenda. (Subsequent Actions arising from these discussions are noted in the Action Log for Current Council Meeting on pg.42.)

**Action 151 (Investigating Social Media)**

**Action 176 (Training – Article on new training programme for publication in BCA area of Descent)**

**Action 199 (Proposed QMC/Training Disciplinary Policy)**  
**Action 207 (BCA Web services)**

### **ACTION LOG – From Previous Council Meeting**

**Action 36 (Manual of Operations)** – stated as Ongoing by Acting Secretary.  
**Action - Ongoing:** Ongoing work.

**Action 179 (Circulation of updated Council Membership List)**  
**Action - Ongoing:** Issue updated Council membership list  
**By:** Secretary

**Action 186 (BCA Information Leaflets)**  
**Action:** Leaflet on digging to be produced  
**By:** Bob Mehew (not present)  
**Notes:** Bobs contribution to the leaflet to date noted & thanked by AE.

**Action 209 (The Chair of QMC WP report to the January Council meeting with a revised Terms of Reference)**  
To be discussed at the January 2018 Council meeting

**Action 211 (Council to review Terms of Reference of both Training Committee & QMC to ensure appropriate coverage of training.)**  
**Action:** To be discussed as part of Training Report & at January Council Meeting

**Action 212 (Executive to organise passing of suitably anonymised data on Year of Birth/Year of Joining/Year of Leaving to SF for analysis)**  
**Action:** SF mentioned had offered to analyse DOB data but no data had been as yet forthcoming. Suggested by AE that data was now available in Annex 1 of present Council Minutes. SF to examine & analyse data now provided, if further is still needed.  
**Timeframe:** Not discussed

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## **REPORT:**

### **6. Chairman - Andy Eavis**

*Following the AGM in June, a lot of BCA activity has taken place. It could be described as a very active period.*

*First of all, the ballot, which was this time conducted in-house with members having the option of using e-mail or regular post to return their votes. Bob Mehew did a wonderful job as Sending Officer with all of our 6000 members and 200 group members; over 4000 were contacted by email and nearly 2000 letters sent by post. As there were a considerable number of discrepancies within the membership database system, sorting this was a very large job.*

*Pretty much all aspects of the ballot were a great success, but it was still a lot of work. Dave Cooke and Bob Mehew in particular need great thanks. Bob has a scheme to greatly reduce the work load for any ballots in the future. Printing out to paper then counting was a very fair way of doing the ballot, but a lot of work. The email returns were in several different formats, some difficult to print!*

*The results of the ballot were overwhelmingly in favour of all four proposals; the lowest vote being for adjusting constitution item 4.6 where groups voted 83% in favour of the proposal. All other proposals by individuals or groups were higher than this, most well into the 90 per cents. An impressive turn out which surely means BCA must continue its programme of convincing the authorities that the correct interpretation of the CROW Act is that it should apply to caving. It also shows our membership is keen on constitutional change!*

*I am delighted to welcome Claire Peacey to BCA as our new Clerical Assistant. The council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October will be her first, and we wish her great luck taking the minutes of the meeting and indeed luck and best wishes for her job generally going forward.*

*After 10 years in this post, Glen Jones has decided to retire as membership secretary. I thank him very much for his service over the years and wish him well in the future. Wendy Williams will take over from the end of September in initially an interim capacity and we wish her the very best in the role with the annual renewals coming up shortly. I hope everybody in BCA Council and membership generally will give Wendy all the help they possibly can.*

*Bob Mehew who has done such an excellent job on the ballot has decided to resign as Legal and Insurance Officer and Child Protection Officer but he will continue a role on the BCA Executive, and I thank Bob very much indeed for his work over the years.*

*It has been proposed that we should alter the position of Legal and Insurance officer in the future and we have already had some volunteers come forward to cover these positions.*

*I am delighted that Robin Weare is continuing his Acting Treasurer role and thank him for the hard work he has been putting in.*

*I also am very indebted to Nick Williams for all the work he has put in as Secretary over the last few months.*

*Dave Rose has stepped in as Newsletter Editor and his first issue will be out in November. I thank Robin for the work he has put into the last few years of newsletters.*

*After very careful consideration and investigation, Tahdah has been appointed as provider of the training database, although the contract has not yet been signed. This should greatly improve the efficiency of the administration of the BCA training schemes and improve their professionalism.*

*After careful consideration, it has been decided to take up the generous offer of NAHMO and have the next AGM on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June in The Forest of Dean. Please note this is a week earlier than previously programmed.*

*With the exercises that were conducted for the constitutional changes, it has been decided that there are numerous other adjustments that need making to the constitution. It is therefore proposed to set up a small committee to report to the next AGM and to bring in a revamped constitution sometime after that.*

*It is my plan to finish as Chairman of BCA at the end of this my second term at the next AGM. I always said 2 terms of 3 years is enough for anybody. Please can everybody help to find a new Chairman.*

*Additionally, in my Chairman's report I would like to remind everybody of the event at the Royal Geographical Society from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> December where we will be showcasing British caving achievements*

*over the last 50 years and have an opportunity of showing the general public what and where the wonderful caves around the world are.*

*Finally, on a very sad note, I should like to pay my respects to Boyd Potts. Jenny and Boyd have worked tirelessly for British caving for a considerable number of years. He was a wonderful mild mannered and constructive gentleman who will be sadly missed. We must help and support Jenny into the future.*

**Andy Eavis**  
**BCA Chairman, September 2017**

**(For Sending & Returning Officers Ballot Reports, as discussed below, see Annex 2 & Report of the Returning Officer at end)**

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **6. Chairman – AE**

AE noted how interesting results of ballot were & how much work was put in by individuals such as Bob Mehew. Also, that the work can be streamlined for future – online ballot printing & counting was fair but unwieldy due to lack of consistency in format & previously BM spent considerable time on membership list detail accuracy, which needs to be tightened up for future.

It was reported that 83% of groups were in favour of taking the first line of 4.6 & that almost 50% of clubs turned out (89 groups voted out of 179). Individual figures were approx. 1000 out of 5000. Full figures are expected from Rick Halliwell (Scrutineer).

Although turnout for voting was much higher than previous (possibly due to a mix of internet voting & interest in CRoW - SH), disappointment was expressed at the voter response.

This was discussed with a mixed reaction – SH noted that 20% response is actually quite good, JP felt it was a representative sample of active & interested voting members & NA pointed out it was 100% of those interested. LW noted human nature means people won't turn out unless they feel it directly affects them. TA agreed that you can't expect much higher turnout, given nature of construction of BCA – many are club members & more involved with their club than BCA politics itself, & that the issue was not felt to be relevant to them. Electoral Reform Society (independent adjudicator) had suggested this turnout was actually good for this type of vote & organisation.

SH noted awareness of numerous incidents where voting forms went to email spam folders & ballot papers didn't find a way to members without chasing which added effort.

DC advised advertising that emails should be being received & chased clubs to inform members that ballot papers were one way. DC also stated that the ballot had been a learning curve from a web/mail delivery aspect & much had been learned to streamline in the future, as well as lessening workload on those involved with delivery.

RW: Disappointment came from how much Exec effort had been input & how many losses of staff/key volunteers had been overworked & left because of it, so felt it was low output for effort in.

LW: CSCC felt that if process had to happen to again, BCA should invest money rather than break the volunteers, as this had stretched them too far. AE & DC concurred that it had been learning curve, better ways had been found to do things & agreed with not overloading volunteers.

In terms of Club engagement, Badger (TR) stated he was a bit disappointed at his club turnout as he has worked hard to promote the vote. LesW: Made the point that most club members see themselves as local club members but not BCA – if they don't identify with that, they won't engage & IW stated that his wife is a club member who had not heard anything – AE responded that a small number of clubs refused to hand on information.

AE: Felt that information via internet was the way forward & that information distribution is also coupled with lack of Newsletter uptake. LW queried how the Newsletter uptake was decided & DC replied that it was with use of Google Analytics. RW stated that people had not signed up for Newsletter in high numbers & clicks on the website were low.

AE stated Glenn Jones retirement, thanked him for his contributions to BCA & welcomed Wendy Williams into role on a probationary basis. WW asked for forbearance in getting up to speed with the role.

*There followed a discussion on the TahDah system:*

GM stated, regarding TahDah, that contracts still to be exchanged but no problems anticipated. TA asked what has changed with TahDah to make it now acceptable given previous questions - RW responded that TahDahs financial structure had improved with various grants. RW also stated they would not be his first choice but he is withdrawing his objection.

AE said the basic problem was with longevity & they are now convinced that that will not be an issue. Also, the systems are liked overall, albeit that no system is 100% perfect for everyone. LesW mentioned one of the initial problems had been no Due Diligence report & that had now come through. AE said lessons learned about democratically doing things, rather than at haste.

*There followed a lengthy discussion on Constitutional Changes:*

Discussion evolved from the original statement of the Constitutional changes (to be considered by Rick Halliwell, in conjunction with a small committee) being a purely practical exercise towards clarity & consistency in current Constitution, with no changes to substance intended, to a question as to whether or not the Constitution could benefit from a greater overhaul – this led to:

1. A discussion on the importance of consultation & setting clear purpose of direction/aims before engaging in the, inevitably major, work needed for largescale change.
2. The importance & difficulties of bringing in younger members to the BCA Council
3. That a clear mission statement & greater communication was needed to help BCA changes be seen less as a problem & more of an opportunity.

Rick Halliwell (RH - not present) was instrumental in the initial constitution (there was a general consensus that his contribution had been highly valuable) & is happy to help with future changes. Rick wished to work with a small group drawn from various regions to put together something for the next AGM – NOT final changes, but for discussion with full changes to follow.

DC queried what sort of issues RH would be addressing – AE stated the history of the Constitution meant that it had accreted contradictory sections over time, and the changes were more for dotting I's and crossing T's than anything radical.

TA: praised Ricks review of CNCC constitution but implored BCA to consider a more modernised vision for a new generation and not just tweak around the edges, as well as a request to add some younger

people to the Constitutional Committee (with Rick guiding them) – as any new changes will take at least 3 years to fruition and current Council will have moved on.

LesW commented that many parts of the Constitution should be in a Manual of Operations & the Constitution itself should be purely a document of Governance.

LW pointed out there were two different visions of RH's task emerging with AE suggesting just tidy up whereas TA was suggesting root & branch change & it was unfair put RH to a task where it's not clear what that task actually is. AE assured LW that discussion with RH would take place prior to commencement of task to make it clear.

AH: Feels BCA is in need of reform, not tweaking – it's a peculiar animal with its history but now 10-15 years beyond setup and it's still very insular and hard for outsiders to understand – look at a simpler structure – good reasons for things being there now but move on. NW responded with history of immense amount of work on restructure with himself and JP (approx. 200 meetings over 5 years) – agreeing it's needed to take it forward and bring on younger members with new perspectives, but we should be cautious about underestimating the work involved and getting everyone to get onboard and be involved. Most important is that the organisations they represent should give them the freedom to discuss in a meaningful way.

AE pointed out bringing in young people to BCA and BCRA to meetings is hard and even harder to keep them.

DC: These are two tasks – crossing I's on constitution is one thing – getting young in is another task. Need to define what the issue is before you make changes. Need to look more carefully at how you develop volunteers through the organisation.

SF: Agreed with DC & AH but felt there was an element of cart before horse in discussing Constitution before figuring out how to raise the profile and what the BCA is actually doing for the caving community – feeds into apathy about voting as people don't understand why BCA is actually relevant to them. Constitution is a secondary process to the vision of BCA and the energy and dynamism.

LW: Said there are two approaches here -one is process driven (crossing t's and dotting I's), the other outcome driven – what do we need? The Constitution may be tweaked but to what purpose? Agree direction of travel first and then see what's needed to get there.

AE suggested both were needed.

IW suggested they are not linked – Constitution is one thing, peoples' actions and experiences are another.

LesW felt young people weren't interested, TA refuted that. LesW feels that the student clubs don't feel they are members, BCA just provides a necessary insurance. That's not endemic to caving but to all clubs.

NA: In touch with cavers round UK for 30 years through workshops and caving. Cavers know DCA but don't know NCA. BCA – young club members are interested in the commercial cave training side of things. AE agreed average age of political side likely to remain high, but younger ones on activity side possible.

TA then asked for opinions of younger members: MR responded with what puts young people off is they don't want to sit in a room for 6 hours talking about tweaks, they want lively discussion, and contribute to a clear vision without being bogged down with minutes and reports (however necessary) Nobody really knows what BCA stands for or its future aims.

AE replied that RN's report containing good info on this but MR replied that it's not specific enough – what regions, what demographics, how is it going to work, very little firm direction or defined vision – it's a very woolly statement of 'develop youth' - AE responded with come up with definitions.

IW suggested a catchy mission statement that will tell people where we are going and what the BCA is doing. At the moment, it's just keeping it going as it is (for the most part).

AE/IW both agreed that I' dotting is just on part of it, and ALSO need people like MR and club cavers.

LW stated that we need the vision first – and there is no structure now to bring that forward.

NW: Biggest problem of BCA is its bottom up, so any top down structure is resisted – most of the problem is attitude and BCA getting support from bottom level – BCA needs to listen and do thing people actually find useful – but fundamentally we need to stop arguing within ourselves and see all BCA actions as less threat of meddling and more opportunity – not enough communication on big issues. Reason for restructure being successful last time is because communication and meetings with everyone happened before Council decisions, so all felt they had had input.

LW/NW: communication is vital. AH: Maybe two or three policy statements that are relevant now and to the future? NW pointed out this is not a failure of the Constitution it's a failure of direction.

GM: NCA much faster and more pertinent development of training than with BCA - NW responded that training sets were put together to be independent anyway.

*Three announcements followed:*

AE announced that he would be finishing his tenure as Chairperson in June 2018 & welcomed suggestions for a new Chair.

AE: The Royal Geographical Society show on 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Dec – a way to make caving more understandable by the general public, & an opportunity to show what cavers have discovered together.

AE: Paid deepest respects to the recent loss of Boyd Potts from the Caving community, with the words that 'the good lord took the best first' being true with Boyd – someone who had held a great deal of respect over the years. AE extended the sympathies of all to Jenny & a request to help her wherever needed.

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## **REPORT:**

### **7. Secretary (Acting) - Nick Williams**

#### ***Including: Membership Administrator's Report - Glenn Jones***

*1. Leanne Barrett resigned from her post as Clerical Assistant in June, citing lack of support and other employment opportunities as the reasons. The post was advertised in the Peak Advertiser (free*



*newspaper for the Peak District), via UK Caving and Descent. Only one actual cover applied among 13 other candidates. We have appointed Claire Peacey, who has a strong background in sports NGB administration, with effect from 25 September, and she will be taking minutes for this meeting. Welcome Claire!*

*2. BCRA have appointed Karen Slatcher to act as Clerical Assistant to BCRA Council. As with other BCRA employees, Karen will be contracted as an employee of BCA with her costs covered by transfers from BCRA to BCA.*

*3. Glenn Jones resigned as Membership Administrator at the beginning of September, citing retirement as his primary motivation. After some internal discussions, we have appointed Wendy Williams to take over on a six month contract so as to ensure that the membership admin. function continues to serve members without a break. This means we did not undertake a full recruitment exercise to find a replacement for Glenn. I propose that the Executive should review whether this will be necessary in January/February once the main renewals period is out of the way.*

*4. I set up a new e-mail domain <bca.online> so as to isolate e-mail responses to the ballot from the Council members and staff involved in sending out the ballot papers. An account of the ballot process and outcome can be found elsewhere so I will not comment on this in detail save to point out that while the work I did for this was not insignificant, it was wholly eclipsed by the herculean effort put in by Bob Mehew and Dave Cooke. Council should express our thanks to them for this work.*

*5. The All Risks insurance Policy comes up for renewal in early October. This policy provides cover for employer's liability, office equipment, Hidden Earth equipment and other similar cover. The business remains with Anderson Ashcroft in Preston who have handled it competently for many years and I see no advantage to putting all our eggs in one basket by moving it to Perkins Slade who provide the PL policy. We need to review whether the equipment cover we have is adequate (and I will be working with the Treasurer on this in the next few weeks) but the premiums have been paid in the meanwhile to ensure cover remains in place, and any adjustments can be done later.*

*6. The PL scheme is due for renewal at year end as normal.*

*6.1 We still need to get a better grip on the extent and nature of the property owned, leased or otherwise controlled by BCA member organisations so our PL insurer can properly gauge their liabilities. This needs to be done as part of the upcoming renewal round and all members need to be put on notice that if clear and accurate information about such property is not forthcoming then their cover is likely to be in doubt.*

*6.2 Please will all members and constituent bodies who have comments, questions or requests to make with regard to the extent of cover let me have these by the beginning of December so I can ensure they are dealt with during the renewal process.*

*6.3. I have already been contacted by two competitive insurers looking to take the business off PerkinsSlade. I seek Council's guidance as to whether we should do a full market review this year, but if this is Council's wish then they need to find someone else to handle it - I do not have time.*

*7. Bob Mehew resigned as legal and Insurance Officer in September after a disagreement with other members of the Executive about a paper he wanted to circulate to Access Controlling Bodies. Bob prepared a paper on the dangers of carbon dioxide in caves and in particular how these may affect the activities of those who work in caves. The other members of the Executive, including myself, did not agree with some aspects of Bob's paper, mainly because it was felt that the matter needed more*

consideration before making a public statement that could very possibly be used by HSE and others to beat the caving community with.

Several points arise from this:

7.1: We need to decide what happens to Bob's paper and whether or not BCA needs to take further action on the matter of CO2, and if so what do we do.

7.2. Bob resigned as Child Protection Officer so we need to find someone else who is prepared to act in this role.

7.3. We need to decide whether we continue to appoint a Legal and Insurance officer as a Council post or use this as an opportunity for change. Personally, I am of the view that the legal and the insurance sides can be separated - we have de-facto already done this in that I have been acting as PL Scheme Manager since before Dave Judson gave up the L+I role. I also think that we would be better to have someone with formal legal qualifications as an adviser to Council rather than appointing a legal officer with no formal legal qualifications, no professional indemnity insurance and no legal practice colleagues in the background to provide support. L+I Officer is not a constitutionally defined position so this is in the gift of Council to decide. I therefore propose the following resolutions:

7.3.1: That the post of Legal and Insurance Officer be deleted from Council agendas;

7.3.2: That insurance related matters be the remit of an officer co-opted by Council;

7.3.4: That the Executive seek to appoint one or more currently practising legal professionals as advisers to Council on legal matters; such persons shall not be officers of the Association and shall not be required to attend Council meetings.

8. Council has for some time had in front of it an offer from Jane and Tim Allen to associate BCA with their newly created <[www.newtocaving.com](http://www.newtocaving.com)> website. This takes up where the <[www.trycaving.com](http://www.trycaving.com)> domain left off. [trycaving.com](http://trycaving.com) remains as a resource on the BCA web site but it's clearly incomplete and is starting to look rather dated. Given how we have struggled to maintain an attractive and up to date web presence across many areas of BCA activity, personally I am of the view that if Jane and Tim are prepared to fund the development of a site which attracts new cavers to the sport, this can only be a good thing for BCA. I therefore propose that the [trycaving.com](http://trycaving.com) domain be linked to the [newtocaving.com](http://newtocaving.com) site and we cease trying to update the [trycaving.com](http://trycaving.com) site. I expect this to be the subject of some debate, but we need to ensure there is a clear decision made at this meeting.

9. Finally, I need to point out that I took this role on from Simon Brooks in June because Simon was clearly struggling to keep on top of it and there were a number of urgent matters which needed attention. It is my intention to recruit someone to replace me as soon as possible, and I will certainly not be prepared to continue in the role beyond the end of what was to be Simon's three-year term of office (i.e. up to the 2019 AGM).

**Nick Williams**  
**Acting Hon. Secretary**  
**4 October 2017**

### **Membership Administrator's Report**

2017 Membership Status: As of today (28th September 2017)  
DIMs; 691

Groups: 179  
CIMs: 5416

*Administrative Note: After over 10 years in the role of BCA Membership Administrator I feel that It is time to stand down from the role to focus on other interests in my life. Therefore, my last day as Membership Administrator will be September 29th, although that will be very much an admin/handover day.*

*I would like to thank all the club membership contacts that have helped make this job run so smoothly over the last 10 or more years, to a point where it is effectively invisible. To the membership, it just happens, and to Council and the Executive, it appears not to exist! I see that as a "good thing..."*

*Please continue to give your support to whoever takes over from me, and please be patient with them as they bed in, because despite appearances to the contrary, with eight different categories of membership to juggle, the job is quite complex.*

*Many thanks,*

**Glenn Jones**  
**(outgoing) BCA Membership Administrator**

See also **Annex 1**

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **7. Secretary (Acting) – NW**

**Including: Membership Administrators Report: GJ/WW**

NW: Apologised for late arrival – due to the Raffle in aid of Ghar Parau – Tickets for sale – talk to NW – Draw 4<sup>th</sup> December £5 each.

NW noted the following primarily for information – With Glenn Jones resigning as membership administrator, it meant Wendy Williams had to be in place very rapidly. NW thanked Wendy for taking the role on & wished all success. He further noted that a three-month period of notice for such roles was needed as, in all practicality, 1 month was not sufficient time for recruitment & role engagement.

NW noted the amount of work put into the Ballot by both BM & DC, with thanks for their efforts.

NW: At present, the insurance cover is via the brokers, Perkins Slade, & 1 year into a 3-year long term agreement. Given the costs of breaking/changing contract & that the opportunity to gain cheaper insurance was low and the support offered was good, he was of the view that we should keep the business with Perkins Slade. There was no reason to anticipate a significant rise in costs, & BCA had a buffer fund to assist Clubs, should a cost rise occur. The consensus was to stay with the current insurance providers.

NW asked if Council wished to raise Indemnity levels from £5mil to £10mil – this would incur additional costs of around £8k. Council consensus was that £5mil was an accepted standard & could see no real need to raise at this stage.

NW noted that the assets register currently held by RW was based on outdated figures – could all Council members review insurable assets (including such items as hammer drills & bolts) & make BCA aware of anything that should be covered. NW also noted there was a need to see what current

landholdings information BCA has to provide to insurer.

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**Proposal:** To stay with Perkins Slade as current insurance provider.

Proposed: NW

Seconded: LW

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SF/NW – a short discussion on actual cover. SF mentioned a lack of understanding as to what BCA insurance actually covered with regards to Access Control groups, & clarity was needed in this regard. NW stated that the cover was uniform & those bodies were covered for activities which were not government covered – also that a lot of the information was available online. SF asked, re Warden activities, if insurance covered caving aspect or organising things such as gates & permit systems, as well as management aspects of Access control, or if it was just an Employers liability.

NW stated clarity on NRW (Natural Resources Wales) issue was best done through Perkins Slade, SF said this information could also be passed to an NRW solicitor to check if any cover was doubled up.

NW stated that the insurers were fully aware that we don't know everything about what we need covering but, in his opinion, it wasn't a problem.

LesW: Mentioned he had written an article on insurance & suggested uploading to website. NW agreed.

*Discussion on the paper produced by Bob Mehew on potential CO<sup>2</sup> risk to Cavers.*

NW thanked LW on guidance on where to go next & put forward some points raised by the paper that needed addressing, with the question of "does the BCA take further action with regards to CO<sup>2</sup>"? NW & AE stated serious concerns that the paper left too many questions open.

LW pointed out that HSE is not concerned with recreational situations & SF stated that, as with Radon, ladders & rope access, caving was an amateur sport & not governed by the same legislation as employees. AE noted that BCA sometimes has employees. NW pointed out that most members of the training award schemes were employed and would need good guidance on how to comply with the regulations identified by BM.

LW & NW – paper should have been discussed prior to publication (AH, TA confirmed paper had been seen, RW stated it had gone out as a personal paper) but BM had been under great pressure. Question was now, therefore, how to move forward.

JP said DCA has taken it forward as they have high CO<sup>2</sup> sites – monitoring & looking at what they can do to inform cavers about what they need to do about them.

SH: Coming from mines & having spoken to BM on the mining side, NAMHO is revising guidelines & is in discussion with mines inspectors – obviously mines will have a different remit. SH pointed out CO<sup>2</sup> is not a "silent killer" as it has a distinct respiratory effect.

NW/LW/LesW/AE: agreed that it was important to let Cavers know about potential risk in an informed but not unduly alarmist manner - NW asked for RV to help with co-ordinating information from cavers with gas meters & from SH's mining data. LesW cited John Gunn (not present) needed to be involved, & that it should be inclusive. NW asked that RV be involved with the information gathering.

DC asked for clarification that the aim was to subtly educate cavers as to the risk. Consensus was yes.

*Vacant Child Protection Officer role.*

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NW asked for volunteers, no names were forwarded. JP suggested approaching the professional caving & training community. NW stated it would have to default to him as Secretary. MR: Youth & development committee may need dialog.

*Splitting of the Legal & Insurance Manager post.*

NW suggested splitting the post of Legal & Insurance Manager, & that he would like to recruit someone specifically to the post of Insurance Manager.

For the Legal post, LW said there was a need to appoint a legal professional as an initial advisor in a 'Gatekeeper' role – not paid but experienced enough to ask the right questions whilst discussing a possible issue in a neutral role. This would enable potentially more open discussion from the person asking & also ensure that a paid Legal professional was not entering into a relationship that they were unaware of. Giving advice was different to acting from a legal perspective.

LW volunteered as Gatekeeper- BUT stated she is not practising or advising the council, ONLY acting as an interface so the designated professional could give advice via LW in a less committing way.

AE: Has three potential legal candidates who are willing to step forward – including a contract expert. LW stated a panel is ideal.

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**Proposal:** To delete the post of 'Legal & Insurance Manager' & split the role into two posts.

NW: Proposed

LW: Seconded

No objections

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NW stated that he was currently looking to recruit a replacement for his position as PL Manager.

### **Memberships Administration Report**

No known new club members waiting for approval. WW stated if not on report currently, they would be picked up in January.

AH: Queried if Clerical Assistant was a new post. NW confirmed it was, paid for by previous agreement by Council.

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## **REPORT:**

### **8. Treasurer (Acting) - Robin Weare**

*Bills have been paid, the books are up to date and the 2016 corporation tax return has been completed and submitted to HMRC. There is no liability. The financial and accounting affairs of the association are in good shape.*

*The budget for 2017 assumed a deficit of £3,625. We are now far enough into the year to allow me to say that there are several areas where I expect expenditure to be below budget and as a result I now expect the 2017 accounts to show a surplus.*

*In this context I offer my congratulations to everyone involved in the AGM weekend for bringing it in well under budget. Particular thanks go to those who organised the bar and the catering.*

*Further thanks to Bob Mehew & David Cooke in particular for their hard work on the ballot. Once again, we managed to bring that in well under budget.*

*The increased charges for professional training have resulted in a small surplus to date and my strong feeling is that this will be the outcome for the whole of 2017.*

*I have prepared a budget for 2018 taking into account all expenditure plans I know of. I have also taken into account an additional income source proposed by professional training which should see that aspect breaking even providing that the decline in the numbers registering is arrested and despite the additional costs envisaged.*

*The major area of uncertainty in 2018 is the public liability insurance premium. We know that there is an increase in Insurance Premium Tax to take into account but we have reached the end of a fixed term agreement on the basic premium and although negotiations on the renewal terms have yet to start our Insurance Manager is expecting a broadly similar outcome.*

*It is necessary to set the membership subscription rates for 2018 at this meeting.*

*As an accountant I have spent my life erring on the side of financial caution but I am also a realist. We will do better than expected in the current year and on that basis and that I think it realistic to expect that the insurance cost will not increase excessively I recommend that Council agrees to make no change to subscription rates for the coming year.*

*The post of BCA Treasurer has two aspects. The financial aspect - bill paying, book-keeping, accounts preparation is a relatively simple task for a retired or part retired accountant who wishes to contribute although it is likely to be daunting for an individual without accounting experience. It is the role as a member of the Executive that I have found to be onerous. Perhaps my timing was bad.*

*At the Council Meeting which followed the AGM I agreed to continue as Acting Treasurer for a period of six months to allow a successor to be identified. The term of that appointment ends on 10th December, a red-letter day which is clearly marked as such in my diary.*

*I am grateful to the member who did step forward as a potential volunteer. That he eventually declined to take it further in no way diminishes my respect for a relatively young person who was prepared to consider taking on the role.*

*That role will, of course, consume much less time if the bickering over CRoW and the constitution comes to an end.*

*It seems to me that the individuals who have extreme views at both ends of that particular debate will end up doing themselves and all other cavers a serious disservice if their nit picking and whingeing leads to those who put in so much time to ensure the smooth running of British caving giving up in despair.*

*Several of our members appear to have plenty of spare time which they currently use making posts on social media, many of which moan about the perceived inadequacies of BCA. Perhaps they should use that time to get involved and actually do something constructive.*

*Whilst I remain hopeful that a willing volunteer (or maybe two – the job could easily be split between an accountant and another) will appear very soon I am conscious that in the short-term BCA could well be in*

*a mess if I stick rigidly to the previously specified departure date. Accordingly, and with considerable reluctance, I offer to continue in post should Council decide to extend the term of my current appointment.*

**Robin Weare**

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **8. Treasurer (Acting) – RW**

Budgets have been set based on past & with reasonable expectation for the future. The anticipated rise in insurance premiums had fortunately not come about. Suggested that Subs remain as are. Training – budgeting had been for a break-even situation on the basis that there is an extra membership charge that comes in next year (2018) & should cover the additional costs of changes to the membership system.

*There followed a discussion on budgeting for Youth & Development*

TA: stated memory of £19,000 being a surplus (RW confirmed two years ago, yes) – if there is a surplus, what happens to it? RW: Last year budgeted expected deficit was £3500 but less was spent than expected on various areas. So broke even overall. Now anticipating approx. surplus of £3000. BCA has built up a fund of around (£200,000) which is held in case of any insurance problems.

TA: Asked to propose that the new Youth & Dev group get a significant allowance of BCA money to send a signal that they are supported in cash. Requested £25,000 – AE/RW were not comfortable with this.

NA asked how much was coming to the Training Committee? RW: Budget has not been spent for training - £2000 in budget for Club Training - Training Committee, RW would like to see it spent.

AE: Youth Committee will be handsomely supported, even up to £25,000, if they put forward a good scheme. Propose it & BCA will try to support it. TA: Cannot think of anything better for it to be funded. NW: Said cannot just give a large sum without what it will be used for being defined. TA: Messages are powerful.

NA: Youth & development? AE: Working group just a different name. Badger (TR): Rostam stepped down as he didn't feel he was contributing in that position & that Rostam had suggested a working party. Have they had instruction to put together proposal for money? RW: Yes.

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**Proposal:** That Sub levels remain as last year.

Proposed: RW

Seconded: DC

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LW stated she had been asked by CSCC to put forward that use of words “whinging” & “nit-picking” in the report were not constructive. Noted by RW.

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## **REPORT:**

### **9. Conservation & Access Officer - Andrew Hinde**

**Including: Crow-Liaison Officer Report - Tim Allen**

*Two major consultations have been engaged by regional caving councils in recent months.*

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*Firstly, CCC have asked all cavers and caving institutions to consider supporting their report to the Welsh Government Consultation Document WG31811. This is an opportunity for cavers to have a say in the future of access for Outdoor Recreation in Wales.*

*Secondly, CNCC have orchestrated a coherent response to the YDNP Management Plan Consultation. This has elevated caving to one of the top 5 interests for visitors and residents within the National Park.*

*Last month I had the opportunity to take the owner of Fairy Holes Cave (Weardale) for his first underground experience in his own cave. This visit was at his request. He was genuinely astonished and thrilled at the extent and scale of the cave. He also owns the grouse moor surrounding the quarry site and clearly works and socialises with most of the major grouse moor owners throughout the country. It is absolutely invaluable to have a landowner who understands caves and caving as a rational activity and is capable of passing on this enthusiasm to his peers.*

*I would strongly encourage all regions to offer this sort of experience to their major Landowners/Manager. Very few would accept such an invitation, but those that do can be very influential (provided you do not make their first experience too character building).*

*I would like to ask Council to approve the allocation of £100 to cover my symposium fees for a cave conservation seminar in the Ardeche – March 2018*

*Title - **To know and share caves and karsts - Understanding, conservation and geotourism**  
<https://dhuquet.wixsite.com/cavesymposium2018/>*

*I have asked Natural England to co fund by contributing to my travel expenses.  
I think it is important for the UK experience to be represented at European level.  
The next project for the C&A committee is to develop new content for the C&A pages of the BCA website.  
Club websites have not improved their provision of conservation content in the last year -so I would like to be able to offer a link to useful content on the BCA site.*

**Andrew Hinde**  
**C&A Convenor**

### **Crow-Liaison Officer Report**

#### **CRoW Liaison Officer Report to BCA Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

*Dear Council*

*Firstly, I very much welcome the result of the recent BCA ballot. Many thanks to all those members who responded and gave a huge thumbs up on the four proposed changes to the constitution. It is my own assessment that this result sends a broader message to council beyond that of these relatively small changes to the constitution. Perhaps we should all take this as a sign that cavers want modernisation and more positive changes to our national organisation. In this respect I echo the proposal I made at this year's AGM to establish a working group to look at modernising the constitution and reporting back with ideas and vision to the next AGM.*

*We cannot ignore the fact that the ballot and change to section 4.6 came about because of opposition to the BCA CRoW campaign. This campaign, which if effective, would confirm rights of access for caving on designated land as it does for similar activities such as climbing, mountaineering, scrambling, etc. The poll on whether to run a campaign received a 62% majority, the AGM overwhelmingly voted that there*



*was no impediment in the constitution to prevent a campaign and now finally we have a huge majority in both houses (88% & 85%) to remove the sentence used by some to try and obstruct that campaign from being effective. I hope all on council and exec will accept this decision and work towards achieving what the membership clearly want.*

*Several of my reports over the last years have asked questions which are as yet unanswered. Put most simply – where do we go from here? We have studied, analysed and argued over the issues surrounding CRoW and caving and it is obvious that there are two views. There is the considered view that the CRoW Act already covers caving and this was the intention of parliament. This view is supported by many cavers, outdoor organisations, individual MPs and backed up by the formal opinion of Dinah Rose QC. By contrast Defra/NE take the view that the Act does not apply to caving, it only applies for access to the entrance and a descent of the cave to an ill-defined point where the Act no longer applies. Defra/NE have clearly stated that this is only their view, it is not definitive and only a court can decide. Are we to continue with this impasse or is there anything to be done to bring about a decisive answer?*

*The first question we need to answer is - who needs to prove their case? BCA should support the view that CRoW already applies to caving and leave it to others to prove that it does not. It is, after all, difficult to campaign for a view which you then imply that you do not hold. Alternatively, BCA could support some form of court action (Judicial Review for example) to determine the matter beyond doubt. In light of the recent ballot it is probably harder to continue sitting on the fence. This should be discussed at council and amongst members to determine our direction.*

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*I am reminded by a council member that it is time to set budgets. Although most of last year's budget was not used it would seem prudent to set a generous budget so that if opportunities arise they can be taken full advantage of without having to seek budgetary permission from council.*

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*Since my last report I have continued some dialogue with Defra/NE. This has focused on a related matter to caving (under CRoW) where their view is totally at odds with the clear intentions of parliament. However, it seems that if they conceded the point they would have to retract a written parliamentary answer and so they stick with their original position however implausible and wrong it is. This reinforces the notion that the civil servant (government) view is unlikely to be changed whatever the strength of the argument put forward. As our chairman found out the lead civil servant, Richard Hepburn, doesn't understand caving, doesn't like the sound of caving and will not change his view on caving unless he is forced to by outside forces he cannot argue with. This will need to be factored into the discussion.*

*I was encouraged to respond to the call for written evidence for the House of Lords Select committee on the NERC Act. I offered a six-page submission by the deadline and will report any feedback to the next council meeting.*

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*I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Stuart France and the CCC for the work they have done towards the Welsh Government consultation on recreational access and management of natural resources. The detailed submission was well drafted and took into consideration both the demand for improvement and legal clarity on access and the concerns regarding safety and conservation. I had no hesitation in personally supporting the document and am very pleased that BCA did likewise. This measured and well-argued approach is surely the best way forward. The CCC have certainly tried to encourage individual responses from cavers and I hope that has borne fruit in sufficient numbers to have a positive effect.*

*An example where positive responses bear fruit is the Yorkshire Dales NPA consultation on a new management plan. Cavers responded to the questionnaire, not in huge numbers but enough to have an effect on the result. So successful was this that in response to the question “what do you like best about the NP”, caves featured fifth on the list! It will certainly have the effect of keeping caves and caving on the agenda. I suggest this is a good thing.*

*For decades cavers have kept things low key, out of the public eye, ‘underground’ if you like. I am not sure this has done us much good. The perception of our sport is poor amongst the public and non-caving authorities alike. If the public don’t like us we are not going to compete well with other activities and interest in caving will be trivial. If authorities (Defra and NRW for example) don’t understand caving we should not be surprised with the problems that we face on improving access. Let’s look outwards more, promoting caving, and see if we can change old fashion attitudes, that should help the CRoW campaign a lot.*

**Tim Allen**  
**October 2017**

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **9. Conservation & Access Officer: AH**

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**Proposal:** Fees available for a Symposium – put forward by AH  
Proposed: NW  
Seconded: JP

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TA: Point of procedure: if a budget is set, do you need approval? NW/AE: Yes, depending on type of spend.

Tim Allen – CRoW Liaison officer report

TA: Has asked several times over the last few years ‘what do you want to do now’?

RH: Another push towards elected politicians is the way to go – NFU is lined up with other lobby groups. How much is the cost to get into party conference for a government party & get access to a Government group?

TA: Who actually needs to support their case? Whatever side you are on, you have to accept two perfectly valid views. As BCA who has voted to run a campaign, confirming that the CRoW act already involves Caving, is what we are meant to be campaigning for? The DEFRA answer is ‘get a court to decide’ – we are at an impasse. The option is to promote one or the other view.

SH: Began by stating his personal neutrality over the topic but was concerned that a constitutional vote expresses support one way. He accepted that BCA is looking to change the interpretation of CRoW. It has been said that timing is bad & that the only way to go ahead is to get a politician involved - they have too many other major issues on at the moment. It may just have to sit there until timing is right. Not even sure how you would force it through – it’s politicians, not civil servants you need to involve.

SF: Civil servants don’t matter, & we don’t have to take this to court. NRW won’t move on anything that may involve a judicial court as they are worried they will lose the case. So, from a caving perspective, they don’t want to rock the boat. To block a surface entrance requires planning permission – this opens up the possibility of doing a judicial review on Brecon Beacons. Anything that goes to court ends up as

sausage-meat. Need to target specific politicians whose views can be aligned with ours & direct them to an easy-to-understand website. At present, Sport Wales is aligning with Health Wales – this is starting to come from a consultation about joined-up activity, which is seeing benefits. There are other ways to sort things other than a judge & fear of a court case does restrict what the other side can do. Look to routes other than judicial for resolution. Practically, civil servants views are not legal, they are opinions. All we can do is point out the inconsistency of NRW saying you can walk to the edge of a pothole but not go in, but DEFRA will let you abseil to the bottom as long as it's in daylight.

As to the solution, we are in the same position as Scotland, so you have access to open-air recreation on CRoW land. Caving is not on the list of prohibitions – Scotland has a Statutory Code of Practice (official interpretation) on the actual legislation – this is the level of official interpretation of law where it would be easiest to change. UK legislation is written in a subtractive way, with a list of exclusions - we can't campaign to add Caving to CRoW as it's not an exclusion.

NW: Has there been any kind of formal assessment on the impact of open access on Cave Conservation? (general rumble there had been talk)

NW: Talk but no formal studies. Logical extension of CRoW is that access should be granted but we haven't done enough to address the conservation concerns/issues for both sides of debate. TA added that there are guidelines in place. NW reiterated that there hadn't been enough discussion on both sides of the conservation impact aspect.

SF: Was aware of a contract to carry out research on visitor numbers in the Black Mountains of walkers with regards to the CRoW act. There had been counters in carparks for two years beforehand, and then after CRoW act took effect in 2004 – it was monitored for a couple of years after – result of research was no effect at all on walker numbers and he suspects the same thing will happen with caves. Most of the public won't have realised they don't have a right to access to a cave – it's the same as walkers, there are only two mountains in Wales with public footpaths but they went up other mountains before the CRoW act anyway - people are already in caves. They may have practically been trespassing but that made no difference to numbers. Actual law is academic not practical.

LW – Supported NW's call for an environmental impact statement of access on caves, as was unaware of one being done (if it had already been). LW then went on to address the 'elephant in the room' SF was talking purely about the impact of caves from the general public - cannot disregard the potential impact of Cavers entering caves that may previously have had access restrictions on them. Polarising the discussion by focusing on the general public and the inherent nonsense, which she accepts is part of the current legislation, is not the whole story.

AH: The Northern SSSI & the Peak SSSI monitoring programme has the evidence of the condition of SSSI caves in their region, and you can split those caves into CRoW/Non-CRoW land. Whether it tells you anything of significance on the level of monitoring that was done is another matter, but there is a base of evidence which is there - no distinction between poorly preserved caves on access land compared with caves on private land.

LW: The equation is not as simple as CRoW land/Non-CRoW land, it is also between access restricted caves and non-access restricted caves. AH: There are no access restricted caves. LW: There are in other regions.

JP: The point that has been made over & over again is that if there is a genuine reason for access restrictions for a cave that is on CRoW land, then the restriction will continue. You can ask for a Section

26 where there is an access restriction on a cave purely for the point of Conservation & if it exists currently, it is perfectly possible to ask for the Section 26 to apply.

LW: Said their local council was not willing to deal with that. JP said this is a problem that needs to be regionally sorted. LW said it was a problem though.

NW: What do we do next? How do we reach our position? If we don't think conservation is a problem then we need to state that, but when letter was written to the Welsh Government, a point was made that Conservation was an issue. BCA can't argue that they are all for open access without producing a coherent statement & argument that all can get behind.

SF: Not suggesting that gates, etc are removed. If there is no need for a gate, it can be removed, but otherwise all gates must stay, as reasons for restriction are still in place. Open access does not mean all access – it means responsible access.

NW: BCA needs to be clear on its statement about its position.

TA: A year ago BM, AH & TA put forward an educational strategy & advice on access from controlling bodies. TA felt conservation issue was being used as an anchor on any sort of campaign for open access. NW apologised for not being aware of that strategy & advice.

AH: Can BCA draft a policy on access & conservation? {General response from multiple council members} Yes. NW stated that that was really what he was looking for - to draft a BCA statement. GM asked for provision for professional cavers - AH agreed with this and said GM just needed a representative to attend a C&A meeting so they could produce an agreed piece of policy.

TA said he didn't understand what the results of this question was? NW said he felt that AH saying a policy was needed meant there wasn't one in place and that's what we need.

AE addressed TA: In TA's report he said that we have work to do on educating the general public and power that be on conservation. AE did not agree with TA that Section 26 had been covered properly, and there was still work to do. AE agreed with LW that local authorities shied away from applying it as they saw it as too much work, and that emphasis needed to be changed. AE said he would like to say in return that TA should be suggesting what he could do.

TA I'm asking who do you think needs to prove their case, and do the BCA, who have voted to run a CRoW campaign, actually consider that they support the view that the CRoW act does apply to caving?

AE: I don't think there is a great deal of debate there, the majority of our membership believe that the CRoW act applies to caving, or want it to.

TA: We need to have a view, if we are going to promote a campaign that it already applies to caving, which we agreed two years ago in a number of different formats. AE: What are you proposing to do? TA Would like it clarified that the BCA thinks the CRoW act does apply to caving so if I have any dealings with authorities, individual MP's, etc that I can be quite clear on the BCA position.

JP: There does exist, on paper, a way to deal with the issues of conservation, LW is saying it doesn't work, because nobody wants it to work, one of the things we need to do is to say if this thing exists to deal with instances & we need to make sure it CAN work. AE: with due respect, we have gone back a step. JP: But this is the next stage of what we need to do and AH's idea is excellent.

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**TA: Proposal** is that the BCA confirms that it supports the view that CRoW already applies to caving.

Proposed: TA

Seconded: AE

**Proposal then modified shortly afterwards, with further discussion**

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AH: Are we asking the BCA to make a unilateral declaration that caving applies within CRoW and you can all go caving on CRoW land? TA: No what we are saying is, when you are in discussion with any authority bodies such as Natural England to make it clear this is the view of BCA. AE said this is exactly the sort of thing he doing at the Royal Geographical Society – Richard Hepburn will be there and hopes to change his opinion that caving is not as bad as it seems.

TA: Asked to clarify that we can say this is the BCA statement when dealing with outside bodies.

SF: Did a Freedom of Information request on Natural England and discovered that they had used Section 26 of the CRoW act more than 90 times for conservation, only one loosely applied to caving and that was for water abstraction – there is no technical reason why it shouldn't be used, just a matter of willingness. Once it's been done once, it can be rubber-stamped. AE said there was work that could be done with that.

LW: What we hadn't decided was that the C&A committee needs to produce something more fleshed out than a bald statement of what the BCA believes. We need a statement that backs itself from a conservation point of view. Not disagreeing with TA about a straightforward statement, but it's the stage that AH mentioned that should be taken forward.

AH: We need to accept the point that we believe that CRoW applies to caving and move our attentions to conservation & section 26. NW: This is the first stage in the process - we can't have one without the other, which is why we need to agree on what AH has proposed.

LW: And the impact of CROW on cave conservation? AH: No, we are going to hopefully have a policy statement that the BCA believes, with good reason, that the CRoW act applies to caving.

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**Proposal:** C&A Committee to prepare a draft policy statement, kept as brief and meaningful as possible, that BCA believes, with good reason that the CRoW act, as-is, applies to Caving.

Proposed: AH

Seconded: AE

One objection noted

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LW: There are two different things here then. AE: You are talking about Conservation, you are talking about the next step of this. AH: We have already been to the regions and talked to the Statutory bodies. NW: As far as am aware, there is no official policy statement about the impact of the CRoW act on cave conservation so we can take it forward to politicians, and that is an essential part of approaching those politicians.

SF: We need a wider view of conservation on lands that are not CRoW – national nature reserves can create bylaws to add in conservation measures. The public access issue is narrower than just conservation.

NW: would like to spend time used on CRoW act over last five years doing something active on cave conservation as membership perception is mostly that we have been talking about CRoW.

AH: We have produced a Minimal Impact Caving Guide & a 6-point code on access & cave studies.

NW – to TA & AH – what are the results of the things you have done? AH: we've already paved the way to deal with conservation issues in a world where CRoW applies to caving. We've been to statutory bodies and National Parks & spoken to them and they have agreed they can discharge responsibility when needed.

Tim Allen: Statements were made that it will be a disaster if CRoW applies to caving as people will be injured & destroy the cave. Yorkshire Dales National Park response was that they do not have any concerns as they feel they already have all the statutory regulations in place to deal with whatever happens. TA said he appreciated there were differences with other areas.

AE: Tim, what did you want to get out of this meeting?

TA: I just wanted you to confirm - I will try to keep lobbying wherever the opportunity arises.

**ACTION STATED:** C&A will come up with a policy regarding Conservation & CRoW – AH.  
LW voted against.

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**REPORT:**

**10. Equipment & Techniques Officer - vacant**  
**Including: Rope Testing Officer - Bob Mehew**

*Nothing of significance to report*  
**Bob Mehew**

**DISCUSSION:**

**10. Equipment & Techniques Officer - Vacant**

NW stated: No report, meeting tomorrow (8/10/17) with someone who may be taking role on. NA requested for the name to be released when confirmed.

Rope Test Officer – BM remains current, for now.

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**NO REPORT SUBMITTED:**

**DISCUSSION:**

**11. Legal & Insurance Officer (Vacant)**  
**Including: Insurance Managers Report (NW)**

NW – covered insurance, not qualified to speak on legal.

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**REPORT:**

**12. Publications & Information Officer - Les Williams**

*I have nothing of consequence to report here that isn't covered in the reports below.*

**Les Williams**

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**Including: Media Liaison Officer (Andy Eavis)  
Newsletter Editor's Report (Robin Weare)**

*I think I remain News Editor until my replacement is appointed during the October council meeting. If Council approves the proposed appointment I have no doubt at all that he will take the newsletter to another level and I urge Council members and others to offer him the same level of co-operation which has been given to me.*

*I am more than grateful for that co-operation. My final newsletter as Editor was published early in July with the usual technical assist from Cookie.*

*A few weeks ago, I was sent a link to a social media post which suggested that BCA is particularly bad at communicating with its members. It is a sad fact that this is true - if only because so many of our members have failed to respond to plea after plea after plea to sign up to receive the newsletter.*

*Over the last 3 years there have been 13 newsletters produced at roughly quarterly intervals. They contain over 250 separate items of news. In that period I think we have been pretty good at attempting to communicate with our members but I have to assume that the person who made that post doesn't subscribe and it concerns me that so many of our members are in the same position.*

*However much trouble we take to tell our members what we are doing, whether by way of a newsletter, a website, Facebook or other social media we are wasting our time if the members fail to notice.*

*This is a problem which I had hoped would be resolved with the availability of an e-mailed newsletter. That it has not is the major disappointment of my term as news editor.*

*Whilst conducting the recent ballot we communicated by e-mail with about 4,000 of our members and now have e-mail addresses from many others. I do hope that a way can be found to use those addresses to distribute future newsletters to our members and, indeed, to communicate with them more effectively.*

**Robin Weare**

**From the incoming Newsletter Editor:**

*I intend to post a link to each issue on UKCaving, and invite discussion on the forum, in the hope this will involve more cavers in the organisation.*

*I intend to keep the issues brief. The BCA newsletter should not begin to try to compete with other caving news sources, such as Descent, UKCaving and club and regional council newsletters. In my view, it should be concerned only with the BCA itself, and at the same time recognise that most cavers' appetite for BCA news is limited.*

**David Rose**

**Webmaster's Report (David Cooke / Matt Wire / Les Williams)**

## **Website**

*A Facebook page for BCA was created at the end of April. It has been reasonably successful and currently has 188 "likes". The right post has quite a reach, showing the potential of a Facebook presence. For example the result of the ballot post was seen by over 1500 people. No one is specifically in charge of the page and thus it is being managed in a rather ad-hoc manner. To get the best from the page a Facebook Editor, for the want of a better name, needs to be appointed. Note, the roll is far more about effective communication than being a technical geek.*

*David Cooke  
Oct 2017*

## **Web Services**

*The history, rational and professional expertise behind BCA Web Services seems to be widely forgotten. Here is a summary:*

*Web Services started in 2004 just before BCA became into existence. Lest it be accused of being old fashioned and irrelevant having a website was essential. In fact BCA hosts and pays for many websites which now include BCA, BCRA, Cave Registry & Archive, Caving Library, Try Caving, Ghar Parau, several of the Regional Councils and Access Bodies and several of the rescue organisations.*

*At the time shared hosting was expensive and poorly featured. For that many websites it was cost effective to purchase one virtual server (VPS) to host all the sites. Another benefit is that it would also give BCA complete control over the server as though they owned the hardware. So for example shell access is possible. For example we could install SVN, essential for the cave registry and archive site. We can solve our own problems rather than relying on third party support (although 3rd party support is available).*

*Hosting at the time was expensive and poorly featured. Once you have a VPS it is very little extra work to host other domains. It was an obvious step to offer hosting to the clubs. They would benefit from cheap hosting and more features than available at the time, such as databases, unlimited email accounts, unlimited bandwidth, cPanel, mailing lists, etc, etc. The more who sign up the cheaper it would become because Web Services has never been run to make a profit. BCA would benefit because it would help defray the costs of the VPS. Win win.*

*The webservers are hosted with the award winning memset.com. So the servers are professional managed and maintained. They run cPanel which patches itself and the server daily. We have access to Memset for support issues but on average there is less than 1 support call per year. The servers are extremely reliable (>99.99%).*

*What is available in the market now, 13 years later, has improved on both price and features but BCA's offering is still extremely good value for money. For a typical club website we are cost £25/year + domain at £6/year (cf £36 + £10.50).*

*On support we are up front that it is provided by volunteers and won't be quite as immediate as a commercial company. That's the deal. In practice we get a club support query about once a month across more than 50 odd sites hosted. It really is that reliable.*



*BCA does need an IT service for internal and external reasons. Since it has to be done anyway, if we can provide our members with a useful service at very little extra effort, why not?*

*DMRC: A considerable amount of time has been spent upgrading our systems and application to deal with the implications of DMARC. DMARC is new anti-spam protocol that is being implemented industry wide. The implementation has had quite disruptive, particularly for BCA's employees. I thank them for their patience.*

*David Cooke  
Oct 2017*

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **12. Publications & Information Officer – LW**

**Including: Media Liaison Officer – AE  
Newsletter Editors Report – DR  
Webmasters Report – DC/MW/LesW**

#### **Media Liaison Officer**

AE: Stated there were things still to do on the website – LW mentioned the issues with a lack of easily accessible press information, including having to ask DC for hi-res images. DC said to send him the information & he will upload – LW volunteered to provide a list of information needed for a press pack. NW said he had someone in mind & would like the chance to approach them about it first.

#### **Newsletter Editor**

David Rose is taking over as Newsletter Editor, with effect from next issue.

#### **Webmasters Report**

DC: New Facebook page, which has been running since April 2017 has potential with approx. 1500 views. However greater consistency is needed in how it is managed. DC to talk with CP with regards to CP becoming a Page Administrator.

GM: Requested how to change background photos on website – need to forward to DC with change request.

TA: Matt Wire put forward report on future of BCA it in March which made a number of suggestions, had any been acted upon? DC replied that a breakdown of subsequent action was in his report & he had spent quite a lot of time sorting out the email & adjusting to new internet anti-spam settings.

Hidden Earth weekend – server issues happened & were not resolved as fast as team were otherwise occupied.

TA raised concerns that the response to the server issues were one of the points in Matt Wires report, asked where the servers were physically based & the age of them. DC responded that the servers were owned by Memset, & physically in Berkshire – Memset was as professional host server which was updated & serviced on a regular basis. The failure over the Hidden Earth weekend had been due to a temporary disconnect & not picked up as quickly as normal as all techs were at Hidden Earth.

TA asked for difference between professional hosting & the current BCA set up - DC replied that physical setup is identical, difference is in support. LesW pointed out that the service you got from a support

company would depend on the contract, which can be expensive, & that support contracts are often slower as BCA techs monitor the BCA sites much more closely. DC added that support from him was free but slightly slower, opposed to approx. £70 pm. for an external support contract.

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**REPORT:**

**13. Training Officer (Acting) - Nigel Atkins**

*Things are looking really exciting for promoting a BCA coaching scheme at national level, the work is done, the right people are there and there is a demand for it from BCA members and member clubs.*

*The DCA caver training scheme is already doing pretty much what we could do at national level and all involved are keen to work hard on this to take it forward, this is potentially HUGE for BCA and just what the organisation could do with. It could create the 'BCA Club Coaching Scheme' for recreational caving.*

*There are a few things that concern TC members and we could do with some answers.*

**BCA Membership Administrator:**

*How does TC get access to members with regard to notifying them of events?*

**BCA Training Administrator:**

*Mary Wilde was brought in and paid by BCA to register members of the BCA training schemes. She was at all the TC meetings and took the minutes. She then notified members of actions/changes etc.*

*Why is she no longer at TC?*

*Who took her away from TC?*

*Why has TC been left with no BCA Training Administrator, paid by BCA to attend TC meetings, take the minutes and notify members of actions/changes etc?*

**BCA Training Officer:**

*It is duly noted that Nigel Atkins is the 'acting' Training Officer. This has left TC feeling that this is somewhat temporary at the moment and work to be carried out feels like it is on hold due to the potential someone else being put into the role who may not be aware what has been done in TC the past and the future vision. Also, the TC would like a minimum term on this position as any hard work done could be 'undone' by outside input.*

**COACHING SCHEME – Introduction (DRAFT)**

*The coaching scheme is designed to be run by club cavers for their members, new and established. It is designed to support a small number of club members who then become the coach of their own club members rather than the club commissioning external third-party training.*

*Cavers have a special responsibility for the care of Britain's caves, potholes and mines. Furthermore, there have been too many tragic or near tragic incidents that could easily have been avoided altogether with a greater technical repertoire and knowledge base.*

*Formal leadership accreditations are generally considered undesirable in the club scene, despite the benefits they confer, nevertheless newcomers to caving do seek and value training. While the BCA*

*leadership schemes are designed for leadership in the professional market on the one hand, the coaching scheme intends to benefit novice and established cavers through the actions of the club coach.*

### **Purpose**

*The scheme provides a reference framework for cavers on a handful of modules which can be tailored and modified by the coach as necessary. This is both beneficial to the club as an outline guide for suitability of trips etc. but also to the individual caver for gauging their own personal improvement. The twin considerations throughout are the safety of the group and the conservation of a fragile environment.*

### **Coaching**

*Coaching sessions are essential and provide cavers with a clearer understanding of fundamental movement skills, equipment, technical knowledge, conservation awareness etc. Coaching is provided by individual club coaches who are supported by the scheme. Attendance for all the modules is recommended, especially if participants wish to submit to a registered assessment. Experience shows that candidates who have not attended coaching for the module they are being assessed for will often fall short of the benchmarks required. Completion of all the modules will result in enhanced all-round caving and provide improved confidence and ability.*

*In the past, the experience of joining one of the UK's many caving clubs as a novice was haphazard and the experience varied from an ideal and enjoyable introduction to the fascinating world beneath their feet or, worse, a nightmare journey into a seriously difficult and inappropriate cave. The fortunate caver who experienced the first of these often became a lifelong convert to club caving, whereas the second was likely, and with good reason, to seek out thrills elsewhere, having "seen and done" caving.*

*While it is recognised that cavers generally do not welcome controls or regimentation, many respond positively to a challenge and the opportunity to learn new skills or hone up old ones. Clubs with a supportive attitude towards coaching flourish whilst those that ignore it find their numbers dwindle.*

### **The Club Coach**

*The club coach is usually a charismatic and can-do active member who is able to provide relevant coaching to club members at all levels.*

### **The Syllabus**

*The present syllabus is divided into five modules. Introductory Caving, Vertical Methods (non-SRT), Vertical Methods (SRT), Pitch Rigging/Improvised Rescue, Club Coaching. Each module should be completed before progressing to the next module. The club coaching module is ideal for those who are regularly leading club trips since it will provide a "trickle down" opportunity in a relevant setting to pass on useful knowledge to fellow club members. At the moment only the SRT personal progression module has a semi-formal assessment in place and the club coach module has an element of appraisal. The SRT personal progression module is a practical assessment for those who would like it. but it is worth stressing that it is not compulsory to hold this competency award but it is advisory if one wishes to progress to the pitch rigging module which otherwise might be offered to someone operating beyond their skill set.*

*The syllabus provides the club coach with the means to achieve a good replicable standard of competence entirely relevant to club cavers and which can be verified by accreditation. It can also be used by the club coach as a means of motivating and monitoring individual club cavers to add to their underpinning knowledge, personal skills, technical skills and self-confidence.*

### **Workshops**

*There are a number of workshops running regularly from SRT to leader training. Contact the regional training officer for further details and dates.*

*The Regional Caving Association's Training Officer is dedicated to improving the recreational cavers' awareness of all aspects of the underground environment and in particular the technical skills and knowledge necessary to explore with optimum safety and comfort.*

*Draft modified by CJ Binding September 2017 based on work by N Atkins.*

*See **Annex 3** for Frequently Asked Questions for the BCA Club Coaching Scheme*

### **Nigel Atkins**

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **13. Training Officer (Acting) - NA**

NA: Training committee would like continued and even increased support from BCA council on cave access agreements.

NA: QMC – there are differences in training techniques being used at club committee, & having Rich reporting back is useful, but need a BCA rep on QMC meetings who can feed back any changes on a professional level – NA asked if we should, in principle, have a formal BCA representative on the committee.

GM replied that it's not currently formalised & has no real intention of being so – there was an agreement with CSCC as to what the new training committee will provide – what NA has written down is far in excess of this agreement & there are concerns over this. AH highlighted this as one of the problems of major reports coming out so close to a committee meeting.

AE responded that NA & GM need to set up a separate meeting to discuss this more fully. AE stated he had always appreciated the split between recreational & professional but he felt this could be a step in the right direction to a more harmonious relationship between the two.

GM suggested meeting be comprised of himself, NA, a representative from each Council who has strong feelings in the matter (Chair or similar position) & who could discuss legal & insurance implications. LesW also suggested Alan Butcher.

AE suggested Webex/Skype discussions as a starting point with the aim of having something to report back to the January meeting.

NA: Clubs are less interested in BCA money than in BCA support – they don't want paperwork but are happy to use laptops, etc. Suggested funding for BCA workshops in which DCA hosts the event but it's run by BCA, beginning in Derbyshire but with rollout to other areas. Trainers are keen to do this & Training Officers from CNCC are also turning up to current events.

RW said he was happy to discuss a proposal for funding.

NA formally thanked GM for all his work on the training committee & the energy he's put in.

LW: Disturbed by tone of Q&A as it got more & more flippant as the report went on – NA confirmed that it was indeed intended to be a light-hearted way of putting across the type of comment in general without being specific to any particular occasion - the comments were made up but based on what

some individuals had been saying. LW asked that it did not continue to go out in that form as it upset & offended many people. NA confirmed that the tone was tongue in cheek but done in order to stop that kind of comment in the future.

**REPORT:**

**14. Cave Registry**

*Hot on the heels of The Peak District Cave Registry, the Northern Caves Registry (<http://northerncaves.co.uk>) has arrived. The impressive new website has been produced in conjunction with the publication of the Northern Caves Guide book. It currently covers The Three Counties System and the North West. A whole range of information about each of the caves is provided including: entrance photo, alias, GPS location, elevation, length, depth, grade, exploration history, warnings, rock type at entrance, access and hydrology. In addition, the website provides access to a collection of searchable bibliographical references that relate to original exploration of the caves. The huge task of collating the information has been done by Sam Allshorn and Paul Swire, the website design is by Garry Douthwaite and the database design by Jon Haynes.*

*David Cooke  
Oct 2017*

**DISCUSSION:**

**14. Cave Registry Working Group – DC**

Devon & Scotland don't currently have up & running cave registration, all others do. Scottish site is getting closer to available. Devon hasn't happened yet as point of contact keeps changing.

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**REPORT:**

**15. IT Working Party**

*Meeting: An IT Working Party (ITWP) has been held via WebEx. The size of ITWP has grown to the point where communication within the group needs to be improved. It was agreed to hold a formal ITWP meeting on a regular basis. A support ticket system will be implemented to help share out the work and provide visibility of the tasks outstanding.*

*Tahdah: Members of the ITWP have been consulted on the evaluation and selection of software to manage QMC's training and accreditation process. The ITWP did not reach agreement as to the best package but there was agreement that Tahdah, the package ultimately chosen, is technically capable of performing the required tasks well. A rigorous process of evaluation has been undergone to establish the software's and the supplier's quality. Appreciable effort has been made to reduce the risk of unexpected costs, the risk of which is high with this kind of purchase. It is not the job of the ITWP to make any comment as to whether Tahdah is affordable.*

*Ballot: I spent a considerable amount of time sending the email ballot papers and associated emails. Since this is the first time we have processed the ballot in-house, this was inevitable. Much has been learnt for next time.*

- *Avoiding the spam box. Many of the emails in the initial test run went to peoples spam box. Quite a bit of work was done to improve the server's reputation and as best I can tell the problem was very much reduced for the actual ballot mailshot. My thanks to Paul Stead for his industry insider top-tips.*
- *Use the BCA-Online data. The main purpose of the BCA-Online system is to provide a validated list of members contact details. Despite being provided, the membership admin's data was used instead which isn't as complete or structured the same way. This created problems and extra work.*
- *Update our Privacy Notice. Our Privacy Notice didn't allow us to pass our members details to a third party which meant we could not use a commercial ballot or mailshot company. We need to add a clause such as "In some instances we may be required to share the information with subcontractors to complete specific tasks, such as a ballot of members. On these occasions, information sharing is always kept to a minimum and we require any third party to agree to keep information confidential and only use the information for the sole purpose of performing their obligations to us.*
- *Avoid email returns in favour of using a website page to vote. I had several complaints that the process of returning an email was harder than it should be.*
- *Test the reply email link thoroughly! In my defence it was 4 in the morning and on screen, a Microsoft hyphen looks exactly like a normal hyphen.*
- *Use a commercial mailshot provider. Possibly use a commercial online polling provider. This was always my preferred option but was not possible for the data protection reasons given above.*

*GDPR: The General Data Protection Regulation comes into force in May 2018 and will affect BCA. The GDPR updates and extends the Data Protection Act. There are two sides to implementation. There is the relatively simple task of consolidating and updating our public facing Privacy Notice. And there is the bigger internal task of reviewing our data protection practices. There is a new requirement to be able to demonstrate compliance with the regulations which in practice means more rigorous documentation. The first step is to identify BCA's stores of personal data and how information moves in and out of those stores. This is in hand.*

*Software Development: I intend to open-source most of the software I've developed for BCA such as BCA Online and the Membership System. This is the best way to manage software development with a team of volunteer programmers.*

*David Cooke  
Oct 2017*

## **DISCUSSION: 15. IT Working Group - DC**

DC stated that TahDah & the ballot had already been discussed, & in summary, they were both a learning curve.

LesW asked if there was a need to formally agree to change the Data Protection Statement.

DC responded that it is a document that changes on a regular basis so it needs to be brought to meeting to be acknowledged but it does not need to be formally changed. LesW asked if it was amended, surely

it needed to be ratified by Council. DC stated only in case of major policy change.

TA asked if it can be changed to allow for wider Newsletter distribution – DC said need individuals' permission to send a newsletter as it's part of marketing law. TA pointed out that this is restricting send out to members & would members seriously object to receiving a newsletter?

AE suggested a mailshot – & a discussion for opt out on renewal/membership rather than opt in. LW suggested common sense view. AH & Badger (TR) suggested if as part of membership renewal process – DC confirmed it was already there & stated the major problem was with club membership, not individuals.

DC stated some behind-the-scenes work would need to be done to comply with data protection legalities.

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**Proposal:** Newsletter is circulated, regardless of status on data protection.

Proposed: NW

Seconded: TA, LW

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DC stated that they were looking to open source the software currently used.

TA: If we lost any webservices team member, is there anything in the way of registrations or licencing that would be permanently lost? Is there a danger of anything being held only with one person & therefore that persons loss would mean the loss of the site? Have we got any security?

DC replied with the key being passwords – domain registrations come back to email, passwords are with five individuals around the country – BCA passwords are securely shared between five operatives.

LesW pointed out that lots historical caving sites were hosted with small local servers who went bust & left the domain name with Nominet, etc. which is why many smaller clubs host via BCA as it's secure, stable & there is always the ability to change. BCA names are with BCA not individuals.

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## **REPORT:**

### **16. Qualifications Management Working Party – Graham Mollard Including: Training Administrator – Mary Wilde**

*The following statistics are correct to the end of September;*

*It has been my thought for a considerable amount of time that the level we train and assess level one and two candidates two is vastly inadequate. We actually train them to the same level at which we expect them to teach, an extremely poor concept. We also have the problem that there is a great disparity in what TAs train and assess to. This is totally unacceptable and undermines the credibility of the scheme as well as the BCA. With this in minded I have developed a new prescriptive training and assessment process which will work with all modules up to CIC. For example, module 1 level 1 core skills. Will include:*

- *Rope work.*
- *Weather and flooding.*
- *Geology and hydrology.*
- *Hazards, risk assessments, risk management and safe guarding.*

- *Equipment.*
- *Access and conservation.*

*This is an example but the other modules are already formed and received a positive reception from QMC. The system works on a scoring format with the candidate having to score a minimum of 19 points in each module they must score a minimum of 3 points in five out of the six units and 4 in the remaining unit. This allows the really switched on candidate to score up to 30 which will be reflected in the cave he/she will be allowed on their list.*

**Annex 4** *is a discussion list for the content of level two core skills which is extensive and will probably be a point of heated discussion. Being so prescriptive should ensure that all T/As are singing from the same hymn sheet.*

*One other problem has arisen which QMC has not been able to agree a solution to, it is extremely serious and undermines the credibility of the schemes but could have serious ramifications for the BCA in the case of an accident. We have been finding at re-validations and now at updates that some candidates attending the courses would not pass their award if they were to take it now, this situation also unfortunately extends to some T/As. At present candidates are provided with an action plan but there is no procedure to ensure this plan is acted upon. I would like to see executives and councils support for a more proactive approach. If the candidate is lacking in geology hydrology knowledge and other 'soft skills' I would recommend an action plan backed up by a time scale in which the candidate should bring themselves up to par. This should be checked by the original update provider and depending on the amount of work to check the work may be chargeable. In the case of serious safety issues, the candidate would again have an action plan which would be set against a time frame, in the interim period they would not be seen as safe to operate and their certificate would be suspended. Both would have the right to appeal through the disciplinary process. In the latter they would have to demonstrate that they had filled the voids in their practise knowledge.*

*These suggestions will I am sure be felt as draconian however one serious accident where negligence is proven and an action plan that would have prevented the accident has not been enforced by the BCA could be extremely costly.*

*I would like to extend my thanks to all the members of QMC who are in the process of finishing documents or who have already completed units, and also thank some member of exec. For their support. The last Twelve months have been the most frustrating I have gone through and I have many time had to think carefully whether I would carry on but I'm still here today because I believe in the schemes.*

*I would like to apologise to Andrew Hinde who should have received an invitation to our last QMC meeting and did not, it will not happen again.*

*Lastly, I would like to raise yet again the thorny problem of access, South Wales still struggle to gain access to suitable venues for level two and CIC training and assessment.*

*Mendip are in a similar situation where suitable venues are denied to them by persons who sit on this council. Similarly, since the change of name from Training officer to chair of QMC CNCC have withdrawn the permit facilities on Leck and Casterton, I think this is just a case of the permit officer not knowing what has happened but would appreciate the chair of CNCC's help in resolving this.*

**Graham Mollard 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017**



*Including Mary Wilde*

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **16. Qualifications Management Working Party – GM Including: Training Administrator – MW**

GM apologised for not having stats ready in report:

91 registrations since LCMA  
31 Assessments at Level 1  
23 Assessments at Level 2  
54 Revalidations at Level 1  
18 Revalidations at Level 2  
CIC Registrations 9  
CIC Assessments 9  
CIC Revalidations 2

Most showing reasonable signs of being up by end of year. Many going through this month. RW confirmed final quarter is a big month. GM: expecting to be at least level if not up slightly. RW said there seems to be a slightly downward trend that concerned him.

GM: Busy year in QMC – new format for assessment is virtually agreed, positively received at QMC & would be a modular system, like CIC, on a points basis. Only problem GM foresaw was that it had only included training up to a level a local trainer would be teaching at – GM felt they should be training at least one, if not two levels above that which is being taught. Agreement as to what level is still up for discussion.

Other worry is that we have CIC s & LTMLA who were trained & assessed a long time ago & are not up to date – so updates are finding them wanting. At the moment an action plan is written for them but there is no way of enforcing this. GM felt if a safety issue arose during an update, the certificate should be suspended until filled. If it was not a safety issue, they should be able to keep operating, but given a timescale & action plan to be brought up to date. QMC had not been able to decide on this, & GM requested some advice on this.

*There followed a discussion on the impact of recent changes arisen from changing 'Revalidation' to 'Updates'.*

Points that arose were:

1. The term "Update" did not carry the gravitas or consequences of "Revalidation"
2. The changes meant that it was difficult to suspend a ticket in event of safety concerns.
3. Was BCA was being asked to overrule a QMC decision? This led to the discussion that taking a decision to a BCA council, when asked for assistance by a QMC representative, with the knowledge of the QMC, was generally an acceptable course of action.
4. That, in order to minimise impact on someone's livelihood but maintain safety standards, if a revalidation was failed due to non-safety issues, the candidate would be given an action plan, with a defined time frame, so they could bring themselves up to date. If the revalidation failed on safety, the ticket should be suspended temporarily, the applicant given an action plan & time frame, & would need to complete/show competence to the expected level in order to re-gain ticket.
5. Expectations & consequences outlined in 4. needed to be communicated to Cavers prior to their

revalidation so they had the ability to prepare & a reasonable understanding of what was expected of them.

NA: As training assessor from CIC he had telephone and written complaints about CIC's who were below the mark. Because it was branded as an update not a revalidation, the candidate felt they were being updated and could carry on. Whereas a revalidation proves that they have to be up to the standard before they get their certificate back. NA advertised as a revalidation so candidates came willing and ready to do some work to get back up to speed. First one just needed a bit of a brush up, second one needed significant reskilling – however he had no authority to hold on to that persons qualification now, as it's a top up.

AE: What's the answer?

GM: In the case of a safety issue, we withhold the qualification until they have proved they can pass. IW commented that an update was not sufficiently in-depth to find an issue now.

NA: If we don't put the work in and brush up how can we carry on as a professional? Candidates are generally happy to do prep work and are happy to do the test on the day – objections seem to be from those who know they won't pass.

GM: Change came from panel – opposed by 2 but not enough. AE: Not sure we can take it further.

GM said he would like to propose we have the right to withhold a persons qualification at revalidation until they prove they can fill the gaps in their safety knowledge.

NW: Why is this controversial?

SN: On the QMC there was a consensus that the revalidation was not, and has never been an assessment and it then became an update as they wanted no ambiguity about it being a reassessment. So, if this comes to council, it's overstepping QMC.

NA: We have CIC holders out there who feel they are weak in areas – at a revalidation assessment they have a chance to check them out – it's attitude towards professionalism, not just skills. If it's on safely a training assessor should have the power to hold them back and get them up to skill on the day or insist they go away and brush up. The change in wording has made people feel it has no teeth and they are just turning up for a top-up.

LesW: If we know there are people out there with BCA awards which we know are not up to standard, we are liable and rubberstamping their incompetence.

AE: there are issues of personalities and livelihood to take into account.

GM stated he was bringing this back to Council with knowledge of QMC, as Graham had already agreed would be brought back to Council at the last AGM.

SN: As NA said, the problem is with the term 'update' as there is a different tone to 'revalidation' and the wards need to be policed. The concern is that if a conversation goes on at a QMC committee, it shouldn't have to go to council.

NW/GM: Both agreed that it was right to take it to BCA as QMC can't resolve it at their level.

NA said he would be happy to have ticket held back until it was up to date – that’s not a negative – believe that control has now gone, and had been dumbed down.

Badger (TR): Whatever we need, whatever the word is, it needs to be paragraphed so the candidate knows what to expect.

SN: Needs to go all the way down the scheme too. (There was a general agreement it needed to go all ways.)

LesW: It’s a job for life, we need to continually update, we need to stay current and have a system that’s fit for purpose. AE: What’s the way forwards?

NA: System worked in the past, now control has gone. Interim – if a candidate is not up to scratch the trainer/assessor can step forward with an action plan and candidate does not get ticket back until they are demonstrably up to date.

DC said had it been extensively discussed with QMC? AE asked why this was not being sorted by QMC. DC is concerned with liability with making such a specific decision of council over QMC.

AE said it should be sorted by trainers; NW said that if a scheme can be withdrawn to an extent that it affects someone’s earnings that it should be decided by council – with a timeframe to alter. And that language is important and revalidation is more important than update.

SN said debate was unresolvable. NW pointed out that Council was here for that sort of situation.

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**Proposal:** A return to “revalidation” not “updates” & if there is a safety issue we withhold their certificate with a timeframe & action plan until they demonstrate competency.

Proposed: GM

Seconded: Badger (TR)

Voting: 2 abstained, 1 against, 19 in favour

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NA questioned who changed the wording – GM confirmed it was QMC.

GM apologised to AH for being missed off the last QMC meeting invite list & thanked all QMC members for the large amount of work put in & material produced. He felt this would result in an excellent working syllabus by next summer. GM cited Annex 4 of Report to give an idea of what the Level 2 would entail - this was for info only, not discussion as he was aware there were still items that needed to be adjusted. NA said that what he wanted from a Level 2 candidate was delivering on safety, & not just a range of knots – GM & NA agreed this was for further discussion elsewhere. NA thanked GM for his enthusiasm.

GM: I’d like to also raise one last thing, the thorny problem of access - our CIC’s running training & LCMAs running training are struggling for vertical sites & sites with enough complexity. RW countered that Slaughter & Wet Sink had been organised for them but they had not taken that up. GM stated there was another site (not named) that they would like.

NA stated that anyone who has done a BCA Level 1 qualification should have access to any cave in the UK – this was not about making money but access.

TA said that the statement CNCC has withdrawn the permanent facilities is incorrect in the Report

Annex. The problem was that someone had a verbal agreement with someone who is no longer in post at The Fell. TA had a meeting with the Landowner & there wasn't anything in there for an agreement to train trainers on the Fell – Lord Shuttleworth has made it clear he doesn't like commercial cavers. CNCC position is to facilitate as many trainers as possible to have access to the Fells & that is a subject for negotiation at the moment – it is part of their plans to look at it & inform landowners & access controlling bodies as to the very real differences on the perceptions of commercial trainers - guides of small groups as opposed to Outdoor Centre expeditions with lots of people.

GM said he was looking at training CIC's. TA stated he could apply for a permit.

SN: For the sake of the training scheme can you define that this is not a commercial activity.

TA: If BCA want to make a policy statement on CRoW, they need to make a policy statement on what constitutes commercial training (i.e.: not training trainers). LW felt this meant BCA may potentially face conflict & should not be putting pressure on landowners to allow training activities, if the landowners were not happy with it – & that there was a danger of forcing people to agree to things there was no legal backing for.

TA responded that it could be just putting up a description of different types of training & commercial caving, rather than a policy. LW & AE agreed that it could be a softer approach.

AH noted that any documents on conservation, etc, should be going to the Publications team for oversight. LesW stated that there was a procedure in place on the website for information to be presented & that any information presented in BCA's name needed to follow this procedure, as well as be presented to this forum in order to make sure it did not run counter to any BCA statements already in place. TA questioned how long it would take, LesW replied that it was more about checking copyright notices were correct, etc – it was purely checking all the right bits were present.

GM: All trainings & LCMA & CICs from next Jan will be paying subscription to BCA as well as membership. At the moment trainers & assessors have been paying it for 12 months & as yet we have not had anything for the £20. So, what do DIM's get for their money? There was no conclusive answer to this, beyond permits.

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## **REPORT:**

### **17. Youth & Development Working Group - Rostam Namaghi**

*I would like to propose that we move from Trycaving to New to caving as the face of introduction to British caving. It's a far flashier website and I think it's fair to say that it does a simple job well and it will be a good reference to point to. It would allow Youth and Development to focus on other things and provided the BCA aren't funding it I can't see any downsides to this situation. You may argue that we wouldn't have control of editing or that malign commercial forces might take it on and try to spin a buck or two out of it. I doubt this will happen but in the event it does we simply build a new website - which we would have to do if we were to keep the current one.*

*As for a quarterly report most of my time has been involved with setting out the terms of reference which I include below. I will consult Cookie once I get back from Mulu about webhosting and plan to have a meeting in November (to be arranged). Please note that the twice-yearly meeting is not how I intend that most of the communicating will be done - I expect that to be through email.*

*In terms of what the group have to offer going forward then you should have come to my marvellous lecture at hidden earth - in all seriousness we will need to meet before I can reveal what we will be able to pursue.*

### **Terms of reference for BCA Youth and Development working group**

#### **Purpose**

- *The aim of the group is to assist with and promote BCA Youth and Development projects.*

#### **Membership**

- *Invites are to be sent from the working group.*
- *There will not be any restrictions on numbers in this terms of reference, rather allowing it to reach an organic operable size.*
- *There will not be a restriction in membership duration, however if non-attendance for 1 year occurs membership will be withdrawn.*
- *There will be a place on all committee meetings/discussions for the CHECC Delegate to the BCA and the ASCT Representative.*
- *There will be a chair of the working group elected.*

#### **Accountability**

- *The BCA Youth and Development Secretary will report back to the BCA by quarterly reports to the council*

#### **Review**

- *This will be done annually and presented at the BCA AGM under the relevant subsection report.*

#### **Methods**

- *Engaging with a wide array of cavers and organizations to achieve the aims of both the BCA and our community.*
- *Meetings will occur twice yearly in person with regular discussions via the internet.*
- *The Chair will compile the agenda*

### **Rostam Namaghi**

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **17. Youth & Development Working Group – RN, MR**

MR: Asked to agree to endorse the New To Caving website & if the Try Caving site could be removed. NW said Try Caving could either be redirected permanently or have a link put up to redirect to New to Caving.

AE: stated he would like to see New To Caving supporting BCA a bit more. TA & MR were concerned about adding irrelevant information to the site, that the BCA logo was outdated & would not be the right image for the New to Caving site – image being very important to enthusing new cavers. LesW pointed out that it was important to have recognition of where the funding was coming from. AE also said that if BCA was channelling cavers towards New To Caving, a backlink would be appreciated.

TA stated that they could add a section for student caving on the (currently being redeveloped) website contact page & BCA could be added in there. Was unwilling to change any of the main pages with anything not directly relevant to them. MR: If it's to develop a younger membership for the BCA then it is relevant to have a BCA link or presence.

MR then asked: "What do you want from us?"

AE: We want to encourage young people to come into caving & too up the profile of the BCA.

RW: To have more people carry on with caving beyond Uni.

LesW: Want people to come & do the sport but also to support the system that is helping them.

NA: I want to see the Youth & Training development officer to be part of the Training committee which is also including young cavers. Why are we not? (MR responded with "Because this is the first time we've met".) NA: The kids that we are training are aspiring to go forward in caving.

NW: We'd like to see more recognition of BCA but don't want to through baby out with bathwater. New to Caving is very much the current thinking about how we get new people into the sport.

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**Proposal:** To move from Trycaving to New to Caving as the face of introduction to British caving & allow Youth & Development Committee to do what is required to both bring in younger cavers as well as produce positive exposure to caving for younger demographics.

Proposed: NW (as additional to RM's proposal in report)

Seconded: Badger (TR), MR

Voting: All in favour

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SF: Suggested adding a small budget for sorting out a new logo/image/icon for developing the image to Youth & Development. MR: This is talking about rebranding the BCA & launching a marketing campaign. NW: This is a start & it can move on from there – this is an interim measure.

MR then stated that there was a need to establish direction for Youth & Development – that they were not short of ideas, but would like some assistance with direction. NW suggested meeting with Executive Committee to establish what this actually means & how to go forward. GM said that the Training Assessors had given a lot of time to Try Caving & would be willing to be involved.

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## **REPORT:**

### **18. British Caving Library Rep - Jenny Potts**

*Library Report to BCA Council 10-7-17*

#### **Use of the Library**

*The number of enquiries and visitors continue to increase steadily and it now requires a fair proportion of the Librarian's time to deal with these.*

#### **Potential Problems**

*The amount of time which the Librarian and I devote to handling enquiries should constitute a major proportion of our work - it's what the Library is for, after all. However, of necessity, we are also still in the process of re-cataloguing the entire BCRA collection and all the additions since 2008, due to the lack of any useable catalogue left after the previous BCRA Librarian died in 2007, and we are only part way through this task. A further complication is the time taken to process, catalogue and integrate into the Library the enormous volume of important material from the John Beck / Doug Nash bequest. We are attempting to deal with this at present by appealing, via the Library Facebook page and UKcaving.com, for volunteers to help with the work.*

**Jenny Potts, BCRA Library Co-ordinator 1 - 10 – 17**

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**DISCUSSION:**

**18. British Caving Library Rep – JP**

All good, nothing further to add.

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**NO REPORT SUBMITTED: 19. Child Protection Officer (Acting) – vacant**

**DISCUSSION:**

**19. Child Protection Officer (Acting) - Vacant**

Nothing further to add, moved on.

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**REPORT:**

**20. FSE Rep - Ged Campion**

**FSE Membership**

*The FSE currently represents 31 countries representing around 38,000 cavers. The General Assembly (GAM) took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> September this year at the 11<sup>th</sup> Eurospeleo Forum in Ferriers Belgium. The Meeting took place under the auspices of the Speleologische Dagen (Caving Days), organised by Belgian and Dutch cavers. Around 300 cavers from many European countries participated.*

*The FSE General Assembly endorsed the new Internal Regulations of the European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC) and elected Slovakian speleologist and karst geomorphologist Alena Gessert as new FSE General-Secretary for a term ending in 2019. I was voted in for a second term as President despite offering to stand down if other candidates were interested. (This was nothing to do with Brexit). Vice-Treasurer Ernest Geyer was re-elected for a new term until 2021.*

*Just as we manage to resolve the representation of one country another country struggles to confirm its national body and this is now the case with Serbia. After many years of being absent from the table the Czech Republic are showing some interest joining the FSE. There are also indications that cavers in Cyprus are collaborating across the internal borders to form their own national organisation.*

*The Treasurer provided an overview of the subscriptions paid. Andorra, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Russia, and San Marino are not currently FSE members. There are no speleological organizations known from Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia and Malta. Monaco's membership in FSE has now ceased. However, the club from Monaco is a member of the Fédération Française de Spéléologie (FFS) and thus represented through FFS in the FSE.*

*After a relatively slow start at the beginning of the year 2017, Bureau work accelerated sharply and since April 2017 there have been many new applications for EuroSpeleo Projects, this prompted detailed and complex discussion with member country organizations which included a response to the changing situation in the Balkans and more globally, preparations for the 17th UIS Congress in Sydney. For the latter event FSE strived to finalize the cooperation agreement with the Asian Union of Speleology (AUS) which has been supported by the GAM 2016.*

**The work of the ECPC commission**

*The FSE, through the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) is now a member of the Board of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) in Brussels and thus directly involved in the EEB decision-making. Bärbel Vogel occupies this job for the FSE. ECPC is active in the EEB workgroups "Water" and "Biodiversity". The "Nature Alert" campaign of EEB, is striving to maintain the strong European nature protection standards. ECPC was present at the EEB General Assembly in Vienna in September 2016 with a*

representative and an FSE/ECPC poster presentation. The FSE will be actively supporting the International year of Caves & Karst 2021 an initiative led by the UIS.

### **Eurospeleo Projects**

EuroSpeleo Projects form a big part of the work for the FSE. Work continues to encourage more applications from the UK. This was discussed at the BCA AGM in June. I will hopefully do more analysis on this with Michael Laummans from Germany and publish a separate report in the BCA newsletter or Descent.

### **Timetable of Eurospeleo events & General Assembly Meetings over next 2 years that involve the FSE.**

ES Forum 2018 will be in Sazkammergut, Upper-Austria.

ES Forum 2019 will be in Dryanovo, Bulgaria from 26th September.

ES Forum 2020 will hopefully be in Spain but this is still to be confirmed

ES Forum 2021 will take place at the UIS Congress in Lyon, France.

### **Ged Campion**

**FSE Delegate for the BCA.**

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **20. FSE Rep – Ged Campion (not present)**

Ged Campion not present, AE recommended a thorough read of report.

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## **REPORT:**

### **21. UIS Rep - Andy Eavis**

Since the AGM in June, a major factor on the international caving front has been the International Congress in Sydney, Australia. This as expected was a fantastic affair with in the region of 600 cavers attending from all over the world.

The venue a rugby club, or more accurately a casino was unusual to say the least, but in fact fitted the bill very well. In addition to the club there was a substantial marquee with vendor and display stands, Speleo Olympics and more lecture rooms etc.

As ever, it was an entertaining mix of science and exploration lectures coupled with lots of field trips and entertainment.

George Veni of the USA was elected as the new UIS President, Zdenek Motycka (Czech Republic) and Efrain Mercado (Puerto Rico) were elected as Vice Presidents. Fadi Nader (Lebanon) was re-elected as Secretary General and Nadja Zupan Hajna (Slovenia) re-elected as Treasurer. The Adjunct Secretaries were; Nivaldo Colzato (Brazil); Prof. Dr. Mladen Garasic (Croatia); Bernard Chirol (France); Satoshi Goto (Japan); Gyula Hegedus (Hungary); Dr. Tim Moulds (Australia) and Barbel Vogel (Germany).

The pre-conference excursions were again a great success with trips to all the main caving areas of Australia and New Zealand. The post conference excursions were similar with many people from around the world taking the opportunity of caving in these regions.

We now look forward to the next international congress which will be in Lyon, France in July 2021.

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*Andy Eavis*  
*September 2017*

**DISCUSSION:**

**21. UIS Rep – AE**

AE reported International Congress was a success & the Sydney skydiving machine was fantastic.

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***NO REPORT SUBMITTED: 22. Youth & Development Officer – vacant***

**DISCUSSION:**

**22. Youth & Development Officer – Vacant**

Nothing further to add, moved on.

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**DISCUSSION:**

**23. Any Other Business**

AE: Do we need to look at any Annexes? (General consensus of 'no')

Sending Officer report from BM: Exact reports of Ballot would be including in circulation with Minutes.

NA asked if there was anyone available for the Youth & Development Officer position? MR stated it was

Rostam. LesW: We have an officer & a working group. Rostam didn't resign.

---

**Proposal:** To add Dave Rose as Newsletter Editor

Proposed: RW

Seconded: JP

Voted: Unanimous

1 abstain.

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**Proposal:** To ratify RW as Acting Treasurer until AGM or replacement.

Proposed: LesW

Seconded: IW

Voted: Unanimous

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TA asked if BCA had an official complaints procedure- AE/NW confirmed it did, on the website. TA stated he was upset that he did not get to see a complaint made against him as he did not feel it gave him adequate opportunity to defend himself, as he did not know what the complaint actually was. Tim felt it had been handled badly but accepted AE/RW's explanation was the there was an indication there was going to be a claim against the Insurer & the contentious part was that an officer had stated TA was not an officer.

NW: Instead of reports waiting to be circulated, they will be uploaded to website as arrived in a private area, details of which would be discussed with DC. JP asked about sending a list around, NW said it was preferable to have them all in one place. LW asked how someone covering a position would get access to the reports, NW replied a password could be organised.

NW: Also, I still have a lot of raffle tickets.

---

SH: Rob Jones is now seriously ill & has resigned from position as secretary. Dave Tyson now acting secretary for Cambrian. (General council consensus of best wishes to Rob Jones.)

AE: Friday night at the RGS is dedicated to Scoff, as he is someone who AE has worked very closely with.

**Date of next meeting set for 6<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**

A cake will there for AE 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

**Meeting closed: 15.40**

## ACTION LOG

PERSON	SHORTFORM	ACTION NUMBER(S)
ANDY EAVIS	AE	220,226, 234, 235
NICK WILLIAMS	NW	217,220, 221, 224, 236, 238
LES WILLIAMS	LesW	216,217, 225, 231
MARK RICHARDSON	MR	214, 222, 232, 233, 234
LINDA WILSON	LW	217, 219, 224, 235
ROBIN WEARE	RW	222, 228, 238
DAVE COOKE (COOKIE)	DC	225, 227, 229, 233
STUART FRANCE	SF	212,
TIM ALLEN	TA	222, 231, 234
ANDREW HINDE	AH	223
CLAIRE PEACEY	CP	225, 227, 235
NIGEL ATKINS	NA	226, 228, 230
GRAHAM MOLLARD	GM	226, 230, 234
RICHARD VOOGHT	RV	217
ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS		215, 237
C&A COMMITTEE		223
<b>NOT PRESENT AT MEETING</b>		
BOB MEYHEW	BM	186
DAVID ROSE	DR	229
JOHN GUNN	JG	217
ROSTAM NAMAGHI	RM	222, 234
RICK HALLIWELL	RH	236

### ACTION LOG: From Current Meeting

#### **ACTION 214 (Engagement of younger members in political process)**

**From: Discussion on Ballot turnout:** AE stated RN's report contained good information. MR stated it's not specific enough in terms of regions, demographics, how it will work, etc. AE responded with come up with definitions. IW suggested concise mission statement:

**Action:** Define goals & pathways for bringing younger members into political engagement sphere/Council

**By:** MR **Timeframe:** Not discussed

***ACTION 215 (New BCA Chairperson to be proposed by June 2018)***

***From: Discussion on stepping down of Andrew Eavis in June 2018***

**Action:** Seek & propose new Chairperson for BCA to Council

**By:** All Council Members **Timeframe:** In reasonable time for handover date of June 2018

***ACTION 216 (Upload of article on Insurance to BCA Website)***

***From: Discussion on PerkinsSlade Insurance & insurance coverage)***

**Action:** Upload article already written by LesW to BCA Website

**By:** LesW **Timeframe:** As soon as is practical

***ACTION 217 (Working party & co-ordinating gathered information on CO<sup>2</sup> level risks)***

***From: Discussion on Bob Mehew paper re: potential risk from CO<sup>2</sup>/HSC impact on activities***

**Action: 1.** To gather data from cavers with gas meters, mining sites & current studies in order to consolidate & generate information which is relevant to recreational & professional in a comprehensive manner which does not generate undue alarm or restriction to activities.

**By:** Suggested initial meeting between Les W, NW, LW, RV, John Gunn (not present)

**Timeframe:** Initial meeting – as soon as is practical. Otherwise ongoing.

***ACTION 219 (To seek a legal professional as an (unpaid) advisor to general enquiries, precursory to a level of formal legal advice.)***

***From: Discussion on splitting current post of “Legal & Insurance Manager”***

**Action:** Appoint a ‘gatekeeper’ who is sufficiently experienced in legal matters to be able to ask relevant questions/seek relevant information in order to provide both a neutral first contact & filter whether or not a matter should be further handed on to a retained legal professional.

**By:** LW (initial volunteer) **Timeframe:** Not discussed

***ACTION 220 (Appointments into newly created posts – Legal Officer & Insurance Officer)***

***From: Discussion on splitting current single post of “Legal & Insurance Manager”***

**Action:** Suggest & appoint candidates into both new posts. A panel was suggested by LW for Legal.

**By:** NW to retain Insurance Officer post. AE to approach three potential legal candidates.

**Timeframe:** As soon as is practical

**PROPOSED/SECONDED:** See Proposal Log

***ACTION 221 (Easing back/stepping down of NW from Secretarial & Legal/Insurance Role)***

***From: Brief mention by NW***

**Action:** To approach & train suitable candidates to take on some, if not all, aspects of the BCA Secretarial role.

**By:** NW **Timeframe:** As soon as is practical

***ACTION 222 (To propose a well-defined Youth & Development training &/or engagement scheme for the purposes of budget allocation)***

***From: Discussion on allocating funds to Youth & Development training***

**Action:** Create a report that defines a framework for issuing a budget to Youth & Development so that money can be reasonably allocated to a programme of development.

**By:** MR, in conjunction/consultation with TA & Rostam Namaghi. Supported by RW.

**Timeframe:** As soon as is practical

***ACTION 223 (C&A to draft a policy on access & conservation issues re: CRoW act)***

***From: Discussion on where BCA stands re potential Conservation issues & CRoW access***

**Action:** To draft a clear policy that outlines the BCA stance on the ongoing conservation of fragile cave environments with regards to the CRoW Act

**By:** C&A Committee, AH **Timeframe:** As soon as practical

***ACTION 224 (Updating of Media Information on Website & Press Pack Creation)***

***From: Discussion on social media & press info***

**Action:** Press Pack to be created with appropriate images & text for upload to website.

**By:** NW said he has a candidate in mind, would like to approach first. LW volunteered to supply information on what should be included in pack. **Timeframe:** As soon as practical

***ACTION 225 (Updating of BCA Facebook page with additional administrator)***

***From: Discussion on social media & press info***

**Action:** Add an administrator to the FB page for more consistent content delivery.

**By:** CP, in conjunction with DC & seeking advice from LesW on format & content branding.

**Timeframe:** As soon as practical

***ACTION 226 (Formal BCA representative possibly attending QMC Council & meetings)***

***From: Discussion on QMC & training committee***

**Action:** Meeting to be held to discuss the above possibility & appropriate boundaries for both information sharing & improving relationships between recreational & professional. AE suggested NA, GM & a BCA Exec. GM added possibly Rep from each Council. LesW suggested Alan Butcher.

**By:** NA, GM, AE **Timeframe:** As soon as practical

***ACTION 227 (Council reports to be uploaded to website as received, in order to give Council members more time to read them prior to a meeting)***

***From: Brief mention by AH on problem with reports being produced so close to meeting.***

**Action:** Reports uploaded by Clerical Assistant to website on receipt prior to meeting. Setup of an appropriate place on website, accessible by appropriate viewers only.

**By:** CP - in consultation with DC **Timeframe:** Prior to next Council Meeting

***ACTION 228 (To discuss possible budget for BCA Workshops, hosted by DCA & including CNCC Officers)***

***From: Training report discussion with NA***

**Action:** Initial meeting/WebEx/Skype to discuss framework & amounts

**By:** NA, RW **Timeframe:** As soon as practical

***ACTION 229 (Emailing of Newsletter to all current members)***

***From: Discussion on newsletter mailshot restrictions***

**Action:** Email of next Newsletter to all current members. Data protection work required prior to this.

**By:** DC, David Rose (Not present at meeting)

**Timeframe:** Data protection work to be completed before next Newsletter due

**PROPOSED/SECONDED** – See Proposal Log

***ACTION 230 (Change wording of 'Updates' back to 'Revalidation' in QMC training schemes & re-introduce ability for assessors to hold back validation of ticket – see also proposal log)***

***From: Discussion of safety concerns following recent change from Revalidation to Updates***

**Action:** Reinstate Revalidation instead of Updates as wording & use of an action plan (with

timeframe for improvement) for any tickets held back due to safety concerns at reassessments.  
**By:** GM, NA **Timeframe:** As soon as practical  
**PROPOSED/SECONDED** – See Proposal Log

***ACTION 231 (Adding a description – not a policy - of the different types of training & commercial caving to website in order to help ease potential tension over perception of commercial cave use.)***

***From: Discussion over potential conflict with landowners over what constitutes commercial caving***

**Action:** Description to be written & uploaded after brief overview by BCA Publ. & Info to ensure consistency with current BCA information.

**By:** TA, LesW **Timeframe:** As soon as practical

***ACTION 232 (Add BCA logo & information to New To Caving website in a way that actively shows BCA support/involvement without compromising New to Caving design/branding/youth appeal)***

***From: Discussion on New To Caving website***

**Action:** Determine where BCA information & links could most appropriately be placed & add in to site to strengthen connections.

**By:** MR **Timeframe:** As soon as practical

***ACTION 233 (Remove the Try Caving website from general access with either a link or redirect to New To Caving)***

***From: Discussion on New to Caving website***

**Action:** Decide if link from a landing page or straight URL redirect is most appropriate & action accordingly.

**By:** MR, DC **Timeframe:** As soon as practical

***ACTION 234 (Defining an action plan/goals re. direction, purpose & means available for Youth & Dev. to be able to develop the current younger membership demographic.)***

***From: Discussion on New to Caving website & Youth Dev.***

**Action:** Meeting with BCA Exec, Training Officers & Youth & Dev. officers to clearly define working plans, course of action, budgets, available resources & image use.

**By:** AE, TA, MR, RN, GM **Timeframe:** As soon as practical

***ACTION 235 (Action report to be attached to back of Minutes in future)***

***From: It was missing***

**Action:** Clerical Assistant to ensure Action Log actually present & attached.

**By:** CP **Timeframe:** Next & future Council Meetings

***ACTION 235 (Forwarding of full ballot figures to CSCC)***

***From: Discussion of ballot during Chairs Report***

**Action:** Figures provided by Independent Scrutineer (Rick Halliwell) to be forwarded to LW of CSCC.

**By:** AE **Timeframe:** On receipt of complete analysis.

***ACTION 236 (Meeting with Rick Halliwell to discuss potential Constitutional Changes)***

***From: Discussion of Constitutional Changes in Acting Secretary Report***

**Action:** Rick Halliwell (not present) had requested a meeting with a small group drawn from various regions (& somewhat independent from Council) to submit forward suggestions for discussion (not final changes) for greater consistency throughout the Constitution.

**By:** Rick Halliwell, NW, Group to be decided **Timeframe:** Prior to next Council meeting.

**ACTION 237 (Council members to review physical assets held for update of insurance asset register)**

**From:** Discussion on current Insurance policy

**Action:** All Council members to check currently held assets are logged with BCA asset register (including items such as hammer drills & bolts) to ensure correct cover levels.

**By:** All Council Members **Timeframe:** Prior to next Council meeting.

**ACTION 238 (BCA landholding information to be given to Insurer)**

**From:** Discussion on current Insurance policy

**Action:** Update & provide current BCA landholding information for insurance purposes.

**By:** NW, RW **Timeframe:** As soon as practical

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**PROPOSAL SUMMARY:**

**Proposal:** To stay with Perkins Slade as current insurance provider.

Proposed: NW

Seconded: LW

Carried without objection

**Proposal:** To delete the post of 'Legal & Insurance Manager' & split the role into two posts.

NW: Proposed

LW: Seconded

Carried without objection

**Proposal:** That Sub levels remain as last year.

Proposed: RW

Seconded: DC

Carried without objection

**Proposal:** Fees available for a Symposium – put forward by AH

Proposed: NW

Seconded: JP

Carried without objection

**Proposal:** Newsletter is circulated, regardless of status on data protection.

Proposed: NW

Seconded: TA, LW

Carried without objection

**Proposal:** A return to "revalidation" not "updates" & if there is a safety issue, withholding certificate whilst providing a timeframe & action plan, until applicant can demonstrate competency.

Proposed: GM

Seconded: Badger (TR)

Voting: 2 abstained, 1 against, 19 in favour

**Proposal:** To move from Trycaving to New to Caving as the face of introduction to British caving & allow Youth & Development Committee to do what is required to both bring in younger cavers as well as produce positive exposure to caving for younger demographics.

Proposed: NW (as additional to RN's proposal in report)

Seconded: Badger (TR), MR

Voting: All in favour

**Proposal:** To add Dave Rose as Newsletter Editor

Proposed: RW

Seconded: JP

Voted: 21 in favour

1 abstain

**Proposal:** To ratify RW as Acting Treasurer until AGM or replacement.

Proposed: LesW

Seconded: LW

Voted: All in favour

**Proposal** is that the BCA confirms that it supports the view that CRoW already applies to caving.

Proposed: TA

Seconded: AE

**Proposal then modified shortly afterwards, with further discussion, as below:**

**Proposal:** C&A Committee to prepare a draft policy statement, kept as brief and meaningful as possible, that BCA believes, with good reason that the CRoW act, as-is, applies to Caving.

Proposed: AH

Seconded: AE

One objection noted

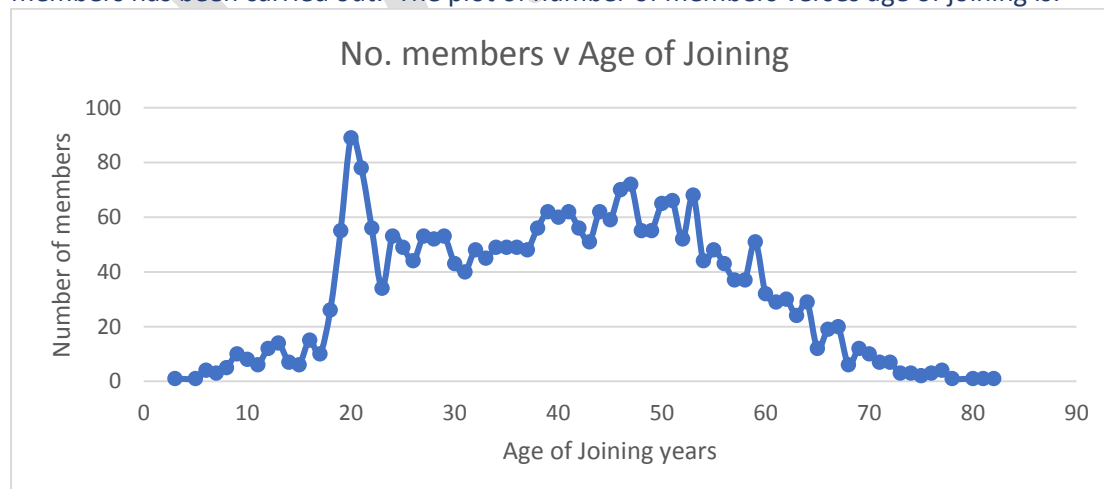
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## ANNEXS AND ADDITIONAL REPORTS:

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### Annex 1 - Membership Age Spectrum

Tim Allen presented a report at the last Council meeting indicating the age spectrum of BCA based on the sizeable sample indicated BCA had an 'old' population. The data set comprises of collecting year of birth and linking it to year of joining and started with 2017 renewals. Stuart Francis suggested another analytical approach but unfortunately it relies on having the additional year of leaving data which will only build over the years. A further analysis of an updated data set from July 2017 involving some 2600 members has been carried out. The plot of number of members verses age of joining is:



This also shows the predominance of middle aged members but also highlights a peak at around age 20. An analysis of years of being a member against age at joining gives the following table of part of the data:

	Age on joining																Grand Total
No. years member	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
19	15	16	2	6	5	2				3	2	1		3			55
20	24	22	10	5	5	1	3	5	3	3	5		2	1			89
21	21	18	7	1	5	2	4	4	1	1	7	1	3	3			78
22	9	12	4	5	5	1		4	5	3	3	1	1	3			56
45	5	2	5	5	3	3	3	1	4		6		6	16			59
46	6	7	8	2	4	3	3	4		2	3	2	8	18			70
47	5	6	4	3	4	2	2	2	2	4	7	3	9	19			72
48	8	4	3	3	2		3	2	3	4	4	4	1	14			55
49	4	3	7		2	1	1		2	2	2	2	5	24			55

The key feature of this table is that most of the 20 / 21 year olds have only just joined or been members for one year whilst a sizeable portion of middle aged members have been members since the start of BCA. This suggests we should focus on keeping these young members by means such as a reduced subscription extended beyond the end of their student days.

My thanks go to Andrew Brooks, Keith Edwards and 'andrewmc' who provided the program to undertake the years of membership verses age of joining analysis.

B Mehew  
24 October 2017

## BCA BALLOT 2017 - SENDING & RETURNING OFFICERS:

### Annex 2 - B Mehew's BCA Sending Officer Report

1835 ballot papers were issued by post and 3988 by email to Individual members, totalling 5823 in all. 201 ballot papers were issued to Group members by email. The printing and posting cost 76p per paper. There were two errors of note in the documents. The first version issue of the Group Membership Ballot paper did not properly label the ballot form as a Group form. This error was coped with since the unique security code was used to unambiguously identify Groups. The other error was in Proposal 4 where the detail in the second box failed to strike through the word postal and omitted a to be included sentence. Given the detail in the first box clearly covered what the constitutional change would result in, the error was considered to not be of significance. Only two persons raised the topic.

Security was enabled by using an 8 digit Unique Security Code allocated to each member. The chances of fraudulently duplicating a number was around 1 in 200,000. My thanks goes to Andy Scott for providing the Excel spread sheet which generated the Unique Security Codes.

The membership list required some tens of hours work to sort out a number of problems. Differences were found between the list as supplied by David Gibson and Cookie compared to that supplied by the



Membership Administrator which would have required many tens of hours involving checking each entry to do so. (In addition, the two lists differ in the permission of use of email.) The Membership Administrator does not keep contact details of RCCs, National Bodies or Cave Rescue Teams, that being currently the responsibility of the Secretary. 16 members did not have addresses. The list did not provide uniformity in the use of UK for country (a number of entries used England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales), nor in ensuring UK addresses had a 6 or 7 digit post code in the correct column. Some tens of members shared email addresses which complicated the process of issuing the ballot paper. Errors, presumably due to human sources, were found in the production of the lists making it highly desirable that such work is duplicated by two persons to double check no one is missed out. Feedback from updates acquired leads me to understand that the membership list updating processes during the year are overwritten by the club renewal process.

The issue of ballot papers by email involved sending out one pre ballot email, the ballot paper email and one follow up email to all members on the email list. My thanks go to Cookie as the other Sending Officer for relieving me of the effort required to do that. Two rounds of emails were sent to all 520 DIMs with email addresses reminding them to vote. In addition, 201 Group members were sent email requests to forward reminders about voting onto all CIMs. It is not clear how many clubs did do so. 3% of these Group emails bounced. More worryingly, several club secretaries did not respond to requests for updated contact details of their members! The issue process was further complicated by my Internet Service Provider not allowing me to send more than 50 duplicate emails at any one time, thus requiring several days to send one round plus the time required to cope with bounces.

Around 500 email exchanges were conducted in response to enquiries about the ballot process. It is clear an unquantified number of members did not receive the ballot paper email, though by comparison, some 24 posted ballot papers were returned by Royal Mail. 60 duplicate ballot papers were issued to individuals who were originally sent the paper by email (1.8%) compared to 12 by post (0.7%). 15 duplicate ballot papers were issued to Group members, representing over 7% of this House! Around 90 problems with returning the completed ballot form by email were dealt with. It is understood that these were caused by the use of a return email address which included a hyphen due, it is understood, with the non standard way Microsoft treats hyphens.

I conclude that the effort required to issue ballot papers by email is beyond reasonable demands on volunteers.

I understand it would cost £100 for the licence and then £0.4 per returned letter to use a pre paid reply postal address system. Thus the cost of posting all ballot papers would be around £4600 and £500 for 1000 pre paid responses. An early investigation revealed one company based in the USA which offered a free on line ballot system. But our Data Protection Act statement does not allow us to release data to companies (as well as the challenge of dealing with a non EU based company). If this could be sorted out, then for example, Survey Monkey (see <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/mp/online-polls/>) would cost around £500 per year to run an unlimited number of ballots. That would also avoid the undoubted accusations of 'the system was hacked'.

I therefore recommend that BCA:

- a. Undertakes a campaign to reassure its members that it can contact them by email (c.f. a reduced subscription offer / discount for entry to Hidden Earth);
- b. Investigates the use of a company such as Survey Monkey to conduct future polls and ballots; and
- c. Ensures it's Data Protection Act statement permits it to use such facilities.

Bob Mehew

## **BCA Ballot 2017 – Report of the Returning Officer**

*I was informed that a total of 1835 voting papers had been issued by post and 3988 by electronic mail, Total 5843. I requested, and was provided with, signed statements that all postal responses had been placed in one ballot box and all electronic replies had been printed and placed in a second ballot box. I can confirm that both ballot boxes were sealed when they arrived at the counting house.*

*On opening the boxes the unique number on each voting paper was checked against the list of numbers issued. The check was purely undertaken on the unique 8 digit security number, no names were involved and no account was taken of the actual vote at this stage. A number of ballot papers were rejected as a result of this process for the following reasons*

*23 duplicate votes were identified. Each pair, or in some cases triple, made the same vote and therefore only one copy was passed for counting, the duplicates were discarded*

*10 papers were returned with no identity code and were discarded*

*8 papers were returned which had an identity code which did not match an issued code and were discounted. I am of the opinion that these were mistakes rather than deliberate fraud although one did bear no close relationship to any issued number.*

*In the case of the Group vote, 201 papers had been issued and 89 were returned (44% return). In the case of individual votes 5642 papers had been issued and 802 were returned (14% return). There was approximately an 11% return of postal ballots and 17% return of electronic ballot papers. Twenty five postal ballots were returned as “not known at this address”. One was returned because the member had died. One paper was returned deliberately spoiled and two were marked as abstentions. A small number of returns abstained from individual questions but voted on others.*

*The Group vote was independently double counted because the actual numbers were small and therefore any miscount would have larger consequences. The two counts gave identical results. The individual vote count was supervised but it was not considered necessary to double count.*

### **Proposal 1 Section 4.6**

*Group Vote: 75 in favour 13 against 1 abstention Vote in favour 85%*

*Individual Vote: 705 in favour 96 against Vote in favour 88%*

### **Proposal 2 Electing Officers Section 5/6**

*Group Vote: 84 in favour 4 against 1 abstention Vote in favour 95%*

*Individual Vote: 749 in favour 47 against Vote in favour 94%*

### **Proposal 3 Balloting Section 9.1**

*Group Vote: 83 in favour 6 against Vote in favour 93%*

*Individual Vote: 770 in favour 32 against Vote in favour 96%*

### **Proposal 4 Balloting Section 9.2/13.3**

*Group Vote: 83 in favour 6 against Vote in favour 93%*

*Individual Vote: 762 in favour 36 against      Vote in favour 95%*

*I therefore certify that all four proposals exceed the minimum requirement of 70% in favour in both electoral houses and therefore the proposed constitutional amendments are passed .*

*Dr Ric Halliwell*

*Vice President Craven Pothole Club*

*Designated Returning Officer for this Ballot*

### **Annex 3 - Frequently Asked Questions for the BCA Club Coaching Scheme**

Q - Why do we need a BCA Club Coaching Scheme?

A - The BCA training committee is there to help promote and support training needs to recreational cavers in the UK. Whilst many clubs offer training, how are standards set, reached and maintained? There are also many cavers who do not belong to a club and seek out other opportunities for training. It makes sense now that the BCA brings together many of it's outstanding, dedicated and enthusiastic cavers with the skills and experience to be able to share this at National level. The DCA caving club training scheme already exists and does this at regional level. It has also introduced a formal assessment for personal SRT skills.

Q - How is the BCA Club Coaching Scheme credible at National level?

A - The scheme is directly taken from the DCA club training scheme which has been running for years. It was designed, written and delivered by 2 current LC/MLA level 2 assessors for SRT for leader and a current and long-standing CIC trainer and assessor. There is no higher qualification in the UK than this.

Q - How is the BCA Club Coaching Scheme acceptable, credible and useable to caving clubs?

A - The LC/MLA level 2 assessors and the CIC trainer and assessor are all very long time serving and current members caving clubs. They have been involved with training at club level for over 30 years developing and delivering caver training programmes for club cavers. The current DCA training officer for the last 27 years has run caving club training to thousands of cavers from all over the UK. He has also developed caving club training officers enabling them run their own club training.

Q - How is the BCA Club Coaching Scheme different to the LC/MLA and CIC schemes?

A - The professional schemes are there for those who wish to hold a leadership or instructor qualification.

The BCA Club Coaching Scheme is there for any of the following:

- 1) club cavers who want to learn caving skills to the highest standard with their club
- 2) caving clubs who want to attract new members by offering more formal training
- 3) caving clubs who want to be seen caving to a high standard
- 4) caving clubs who want to deliver caving skills to the highest standard
- 5) caving clubs who want to encourage and develop their own club coaches
- 6) club coaches who have limited time to commit to the professional awards
- 7) club coaches who only want to teach basic caving skills
- 8) club coaches who only want to teach SRT skills
- 9) club coaches who only want to teach SRT rigging skills

### **The BCA Club Coaching Scheme:**

Q - Is the BCA Club Coaching Scheme there for people to make money?

A - There is no money available for the recreational caving scheme. All of the work done in the DCA scheme has been done voluntarily which continues to be the case with the BCA.

Q - Why would anyone produce the BCA Club Coaching Scheme for no money?

A - passion for safe caver training. You can ask the people involved in the scheme for their personal reasons for giving their time and expertise to the BCA for free.

Q - Who is running the BCA Club Coaching Scheme?

A - The BCA Club Coaching Scheme panel is made up of a dedicated and passionate group of long serving trainers and assessors from the BCA professional schemes. They are also full members of long standing and reputable caving clubs and in this panel they all work as volunteers. At the moment, they are all BCA training Committee members, however if things progress well, other equally minded and dedicated long serving club cavers who are also trainers and assessors from the BCA professional schemes may be invited to join.

Q - How does the BCA Club Coaching Scheme keep current?

A - The scheme is transparent and under constant review by the BCA Club Coaching Scheme panel who report directly to BCA Training Committee.

Q - Our club members are all brilliant cavers and don't need any training, why should we look at the BCA Club Coaching Scheme?

A - You don't. You are obviously well trained and experts in the field (or under it). Don't be surprised that the club next door starts to attract lots of new members.

Q - Our club members are all great at climbing ladders and don't need ropes. No one has fallen off or got injured. Why do we need training?

A - You don't need training, you need to see a psychiatrist. You have obviously got away with it for far too long. Make sure you get a good lawyer for when someone does take a tumble. Don't be surprised that the club next door calls you a bunch of T....ers.

Q - Our club has existing for over 400 years. We don't do training, never have done and never will?

A - Who are you trying to kid. Training happens all the time. When you buy a harness, a new lamp or show someone how to tie a knot, this is all training. The BCA Club Coaching Scheme simply has most things written up in a structured way using common sense and experience of club cavers and professionals alike.

Q - Can we buy in a CIC to run the BCA Club Coaching Scheme in our club?

A - If they are not an accredited club coach or a scheme trainer/assessor, they can of course provide any training you require but they may introduce personal opinions that are not necessarily agreed at National level, therefore to ensure the highest level of delivery and consistency within the scheme, only BCA Club Coaching Scheme accredited club coaches or trainer/assessor will be recognised. Many CIC holders work in isolation to other areas and may not necessarily be a club caver at all.

Q - We are BCA members but not members of a club, can we do any of the training modules outside a club?

A - Yes. There will be workshops that you can attend as BCA individual members. These are run at the moment by BCA Club Coaching Scheme approved trainers/assessors.

**Module 1:**

Q - Who can run this for our club?

A - Either an accredited club coach or someone in your club that has been approved by your club to introduce newcomers to caving.

**Module 2:**

Q - Who can run this for our club?

A - Again, either an accredited club coach or someone in your club that has been approved by your club to take people on basic vertical caving trips.

**Module 3:**

Q - Are there any assessments?

A - At the moment, only module 3 (SRT personal progression) has a formal assessment in place and module 5 (Club Coach) has an element of assessment in place. Module 3, SRT personal progression is a formal practical assessment for those who would like it. It is not compulsory to hold this competency award.

Q - Is there a charge for the module 3 assessment?

A - Yes, to cover the expenses/cost of the assessor.

Q - Can any of our club members go for module 3 assessment without any input from any BCA Club Coaching Scheme approved trainers?

A - Yes, of course. We are here to promote the highest level of training for cavers. If you already have a CIC holder in your club or your training officer is very experienced, we will support you. Any club members can book onto one of the module 3 assessments as long as they are confident in their personal SRT progression. The BCA Club Coaching Scheme is not there to sell training but to support clubs with their training.

Q - We are BCA members but not members of a club, can we go for module 3 assessment?

A - Yes, of course. You may have attended an SRT training course with a CIC holder, attended a BCA training workshop or just self-taught. As long as you are all BCA members and feel confident in your own personal SRT progression, you can book onto one of the module 3 assessments. These assessments will also refresh and may update you with your personal techniques.

Q - Can you fail module 3 assessment?

A - If you do something that is unsafe, then you will be removed from the assessment. So not really a fail, just not completed. We are there to encourage you to be the best you can be, however if you are not at the minimum standard, we will give you an action plan to get you ready for a re assessment. It's all very positive.

Q - If I pass the module 3 assessment, am I qualified?

A - If you pass, you will receive a certificate of competence. Some people may like to call this a qualification, but we issue a pass certificate of competence in SRT personal progression.

Q - We are all competent SRT cavers, do we need to undertake module 3 assessment?

A - No, of course not. It is the training that matters to us, not assessment. We are not fans of assessments at club level, however there are many cavers out there that would like some form of official stamp to say that they can demonstrate SRT at a high level. This module 3 assessment gives them this recognition, which will hopefully boost their confidence too.

Q - Who runs the module 3 assessment?

A - These are set up by BCA Club Coaching Scheme panel. Each area has an approved trainer/assessor who runs this module in their region. They may also be joined by another trainer/assessor at the discretion of the panel.

Q - Is there an age limit to the module 3 assessment?

A - Not really. The youngest SRT module 3 holder of the DCA scheme at the moment is 15, he was younger than this when undergoing formal assessment. In France, families go caving together and all use SRT. For cavers below the age of 18 that may not be eligible to join a club but wish to undertake the assessment, can do so. They will be assessed at exactly the same standard and against the set criteria. The assessor will make judgements on the day to safeguard anyone under 18 whilst undergoing the assessment. Anyone under the age of 18 will come under the clubs' duty of care about how they can ensure that they are safe when caving. It may be that they use SRT but are also on a lifeline or other system when abseiling.

Q - Do you need to be a member of BCA to attend the module 3 assessment?

A - Not really, however we may ask why you are not a BCA member and what we can do to encourage you to join. It could be that you pay the fee, attend the assessment but not receive the BCA certificate unless you are a member. For cavers below the age of 18 that may not be eligible to join a club or BCA as an individual member will be treated the same as above, however it may be that the under 18 is coming with their parent, guardian, relation or a friend who is a full member of BCA.

#### **Module 4:**

Q - Are there any assessments?

A - There could be in the future if clubs think it will be of benefit to them, however there is nothing in place at the moment.

#### **Module 5:**

Q - Do club coaches need to attend any training?

A - yes, of course. There is a process to ensure that they hold the appropriate experience and skills to be a club coach.

Q - Do club coaches need to attend any assessment?

A - yes, how else will you know that they are competent enough to deliver your training needs? The process to become accredited as a club coach is in the syllabus. Not such an assessment, more as a workshop to include an element of assessment and further training opportunities.

Q - Do club coaches need to pay anything?

A - There will be a charge per person for registration and to cover the costs of any workshops they need to attend if BCA cannot pay for these.

Q - Why do you have a re-accreditation or club coaches and not an update?

A - Many things can change in 3 years and that is where the BCA Club Coaching Scheme panel have their opportunity to update the BCA club coaches. It is also clear that some BCA club coaches may have skills fade and not delivering training to the standard of the scheme. This is why it is important to have an element of assessment within the accreditation process.

Q - Is it possible that a BCA club coach may not be re-accredited?

A - It is highly unlikely, however if someone has undergone a complete loss of memory, forgot how to tie a figure of 8 knot, tells people it's ok to abseil on 6mm rope that's 40 years old or brings the scheme down in any way, we feel it's only right to remove this persons status for the sake of common sense, protection of BCA and the rest of the world for that matter.

Q - Is there a time limit on how long a BCA 'club coach' is accredited for?

A - yes, this lasts up to 3 years. After this they attend a re-accreditation workshop which involves input by the BCA Club Coaching Scheme panel and an element of assessment for the club coach. This is to ensure that high standards are maintained.

Q - Are club coaches more qualified than CIC holders?

A - No. The CIC scheme is there for professionals who are instructing at the top level and have gone through all of the BCA professional schemes. Club coaches are assessed for skills training at club level and may have little or no leadership experience at all. Club Coaches are trained and accredited to train club cavers. If they wish to go onto a formal qualification, they will be introduced to the BCA professional schemes.

Q - Are club coaches more experienced than CIC holders?

A - It could be that they may have more SRT teaching hours under their belt, however the CIC scheme is there for professionals who are instructing at the top level. We know of a couple of club training officers/coaches who teach SRT in their club at a very high standard and have no interest at all in going through the professional scheme.

Q - Does our club training officer need to be a BCA club coach?

A - No. The function of the club training officer may be that of organising club training, not necessarily to deliver it.

Q - Can our club have more than one BCA club coach?

A - Yes, of course and we would encourage it. Your club may even be approached by another club for you to deliver some training to them.

Q - Does our club get to be approved as a BCA club coach training club?

A - No. However, you can advertise that you have a BCA club coach as a member who runs the scheme for your club. Your accredited BCA club coach may leave your club and join another one. The accreditation is to the individual BCA club coach and not the club.

### **The BCA Club Coaching Scheme Trainers and Assessors:**

Q - How are the BCA Club Coaching Scheme trainers and assessors vetted/approved?

A - The only formal assessors for SRT are CIC assessors or LC/MLA level 2 with module 5 assessors (SRT for leader).

Assessors for the BCA Club Coaching Scheme hold one of these positions, are current within the BCA professional schemes, members of the BCA Club Coaching Scheme panel and are fully involved with the BCA Club Coaching Scheme. Assessors are constantly involved with assessments to ensure that they are all current.

Trainers for the BCA Club Coaching Scheme are either members of the BCA Club Coaching Scheme panel (some members may be limited to which modules they can deliver) or an accredited BCA Club Coaching Scheme club coach.

Q - I am a very experienced caver and a CIC holder, can I run assessments for the BCA Club Coaching Scheme?

A - A simple answer at this early stage is no. We encourage clubs to either train their own trainers or if you don't have club members at a high skills/experience level you can always buy in CIC holders for training. However, to keep the scheme consistent, credible and functional, a strict process is in place when it comes to formal assessment.

### **Annex 4 - Discussion list for the content of level two core skills**

#### Level Two Core Skill Modules 3&5

##### KNOTS

- 3 Figure of eight on a bight.
- 3 Stopper knot (half a double fisherman's).
- 3 Cavers Butterfly.
- 4 Alpine butterfly.
- 3 Italian hitch.
- 4/5 Mariners knot.
- 4 Double fisherman's.
- 3 Double bowline
- 4 Bowline on a bight
- 4 Rethreaded bowline
- 5 Fusion knot.
- 5 Self centering bowline on a bight.

##### Ladders

- 3 Construction (swaged / pin and araldite).
- 3 Spreaders.
- 3 Linkage – c links or mailons.
- 3 Releasing ladders under load.
- 3 Client caught possibly inverted on ladder.
- 3 Client tired requiring assistance.

##### Abseil

- 3 Releasable.



- 4 Releasable when part of continuous rope from traverse.
- 3 Appropriate rope type /diameter.
- 3 Types of descenders.
- 3 Italian hitch pros and cons.
- 3 Fig of 8 pros and cons.
- 3 Gri-Gri pros and cons.
- 4 Stop pros and cons.
- 4 Enhanced braking.
- 3 Any item caught in the above methods of descent.

Anchors.

- 4 Spits how to check them and how they are placed
- 4 Types of hangers for spits and how to place.
- 5 Goujons.
- 3 Natural anchors and checks.
- 3 P38.
- 3 Resin anchors.
- 3 Aligning anchors.

Cowstails

- 3 Rope type
- 4 Knots – Barrel / figure of eight on a bight/ overhand.
- 4 Karabiners what type and why.
- 3 Replacements – when

Traverses.

- 3 Height.
- 3 Tension.
- 4 Start.
- 4 Finish.

Lifeline.

- 5 Rig for rescue.
- 2/4 Preferred method.
- 2/5 Hardware and it's uses.
- 3 Instructor safety.

SRT for leader.

- 3 Leaders rig.
- 4 Travelling ladder.
- 4 Descend = choice of descender.
- 3 Ascend - choice of ascenders.
- 5 Down prussik.
- 4 Change from descent to ascend.
- 4 Change from ascend to descend.
- 5 Pass a knot descending.
- 5 Pass a knot ascending.
- 5 Improvise having lost an ascender.
- 5 Improvise having lost a descender.

Rescue techniques with an emergency rope.

- 3 Assisted hoist where the client can help.
- 3 Z rig hoist 1 to 1.
- 3 Counter balance hoist.

- 5 Removing client from a taut rope using a rescue rope.
- 5 Removing client from taut rope, down prussic, bringing up tail etc.
- 4 Use of stop in rescue situations.
- 4 Use of pulleys in rescue situations.
- 4 Use of traction / mini traction in rescue situations.
- 4 Use of pulley jammer in rescue situations.
- 5 Developing slack in a taut rope without a rescue rope.
- 3/5 Be able to reverse any procedure you choose to use.
- 3/5 Client stuck on ladder unable to help themselves at the end of a traverse, bring them up and across traverse

Pitch rigging.

- 3/5 Ease of access.
- 2/4 Means of protection of the instructor.

Derigging.

- 2/4 Safety of the instructor

Candidate's equipment

- 3/5 Quality and condition of personal equipment.
- 3/5 Choice of equipment.

2/4 Organisation of ropes etc.

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