

JANUARY 6, 2018



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
Pete Hall	PH	DIM/CIM Rep. 3
Les Williams	LesW	BCA Publ. & Info. Off
Allan Richardson	SF	CCC Rep.
Alan Butcher	AB	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
John Hine	JH	Club Rep. 4
Mark Richardson	MR	DIM/CIM Rep.1
Tim Allen	TA	BCA CRoW Liaison/CNCC Rep
Stuart France	SF	Cambrian Caving Council
Wendy Williams	WW	BCA Membership Administrator
Claire Peacey	CP	Clerical Assistant
Nick De Garepitt	NDG	Brynmawr Caving Club
David Botcherby	CP	CHECC/BCA Y&D

The meeting commenced at 10.35

1. Chairman's Welcome

AE opened the meeting and thanked all for attending.

2. Apologies

(Idris Williams, Bob Mehew, Matt Wire, Will Burn, Ged Campion, Rostam Namaghi, John Allen)

3. Items for Any Other Business

AE asked if there were any other papers to be presented.

NW said that the Agenda order at that point should be showing adopting new clubs – need to do before Officers Reports. AE suggested at Membership report, NW said constitutionally it should occur at this point.

WW reported there were three new clubs, Shark Speleological Society, Peak District Mines Historical Society (formed from Peak District Cavers - now two clubs, due to a split) & Former Explorers of Kent University – all correct forms filled in. NW asked if the 100 words filled in? WW stated that Sharks provided the 100 words required and the other two had filled in former forms. Cavers from Kent Uni did not provide 100 words but were part of an existing club.

NW asked CP to make sure club submissions are listed correctly as an agenda item and if WW could

submit details to CP prior to meeting. AE said just to make sure not back in old situation where we have a name of club but know nothing about them. WW said Sharks had done all required as they applied prior to last meeting.

AE asked if all happy with new clubs.

SF asked for a deferral on approval until all the information requested had been supplied, as we either have a procedure, or we don't.

To this statement, RW said propose and accept, LW seconded.

NW took the point that we have a procedure, and that it was reasonable to ask for documents to be available for next council meeting for review, but to deny them ratification now would compromise their insurance.

SF said he felt they were stampeding into a vote and needed to know more, such as how many members the clubs had, how long they had been in operation, etc.

JP said that Peak District Cavers were very well thought of, currently members of BCA, and would recommend them without the slightest problem. NW seconded this as they were long standing members.

DC said there are minimum standards and guidelines clubs have to meet, and they have done so

SF and AE made point that everyone doesn't know who they are, and info should be circulated.

NW said would be wrong to say can't be members for another 3 months, forms can be ratified at next meeting.

SF asked if there was clear policy of what was expected? NW said it was listed on the website but not always on form. TA asked if we had ever rejected any club applications? AE/NW said only one, TA replied that in that case, it's not much of an issue.

SF said he was happy to take on trust for this time. AE agreed that good points had been made.

AE Proposed all accepted
All seconded, no objections.

4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on October 7th 2017 - circulated

AE Minutes of last meeting had been circulated and they were a good first run from CP with the recording seeming to work well. Were there any comments?

NW said noticed the following error for correction:

DC: Pg. 31 – 3rd paragraph DC confirmed it was already there... major problem with club membership not DIMS 'Major problem with SIM not DIMS' should be.

TA noted the following:

1st: List present – CNCC in absence of specific rep, should have been TA not blank.

2nd: Pg. 5. In discussion of Chairman's Report/Ballot – RW said to have said that it had been a low input and losses of staff/key volunteers had been overworked because of it/LW breaking volunteers – TA asked who it was talking about, as it sounded like it was talking about Bob Mehew. RW asked who TA would like to see there. RW clarified to TA that the statement was NOT specifically about Bob Mehew.
3rd: Pg. 21 - 2 proposals on page, TA made the first proposal that BCA supports view that the CRow Act applies to caving, but the minutes go on to say proposal was then modified.
TA said the first statement was proposed and voted on, but the second proposal makes it sound like it's conditional on the second proposal.

TA asked does that first proposal stand *as is* that Council voted and approved that statement? Later on, we went on to discuss a policy statement which resulted in second proposal – just not clear the first stands as agreed proposal from this Council. Makes it sound like you have to agree a policy statement.

JP backed TA in sense of minutes conveying definite proposal that was passed with first proposal.

SH: Hadn't particularly noted but can't accept as don't know from minutes if it's clear if first stands.

TA says second proposal is Not A modified proposal, first one is stands as it is.

DC says he can't recall exactly but things discussion moved on. LW asked if recording could be listened to, if needed. CP confirmed recording was available.

AE suggested dropping the second section of proposal modified section. LW said TA was concerned about it changing wording. TA said he wouldn't want to use that as it is now when speaking to people and risk having people subsequently come back to say "that's not what Council said".

AE said he felt the second proposal overruled the first but he has no problem with both proposals being in. TA said second proposal was in hand, but the length of time needed for the process would take it through to the AGM. What he was asking was that the first proposal was what was voted on by council?

Proposal: To drop out the word that read "modified" as this made it clearer.

Proposed: AE

Seconded: RW/LW

No objections

TA said he would be happy with that as he could use the wording of the first proposal.

AB questioned if it was voted on – if not, it's not a proposal. AB said can't revisit history. AB stated he didn't think the first one was voted on, and that second is basically what the first one says. AB said he doesn't want to change history.

TA said he needs to know if the following statement applies or not:

"BCA believes with good reason that the Crow act applies to caving, the C&A committee will prepare a statement. AE said TA can go and say, with good reason, the Crow act applies to caving."

AE asked if anybody had any objections - there were no objections raised.

AE said we can apply that.

LW pointed out that the words are there.

As there were no other points raised against the Minutes, AE asked if we could now sign as a true record. There were no objections.

Minutes Accepted (with above stated corrections pending).

5. Matters arising for the Minutes of the Last Council Meeting

AE then covered the previous Actions List (For details, see log at end of report)

REPORT:

6. Chairman's Report – Andy Eavis

There have been quite a few positive things happening within the BCA Council over the last few months. Rick Halliwell is starting to review the constitution. The holiday season has prevented him doing as much as he would like, but once the current constitutional changes with reference to the AGM and referendum are complete he will start work on tidying up the constitution. He hopes to have some ideas for the coming 2018 AGM, with something in a more advanced state for the 2019 AGM.

Reorganisation within training has continued. QMC is settling in as the body covering professional caving and the Training Committee covering recreational training. Graham Mollard has passed over the reins of QMC to Phil Baker, who is acting as Chairman for the time being. We thank Graham for his enormous contribution to training over the last few years. Nigel Atkins is heading up the training committee, and as you can see from these reports is having quite a positive effect. The Secretary and myself will give whatever help we can to these training committees as we see this as a very important part of the BCA's activities.

Dave Rose's newsletter made good reading, although in places a little controversial.

The clarification of CROW continues. There is a lot happening in this area and it is obvious it is going to take more time. We must not forget that access rights are under the auspices of regional councils and BCA exists to help and advise, but not control, the regional councils.

As usual, I have to thank many members of Council for the work they are doing, particularly the training committees and conservation and access, but above all, my fellow executive members Nick Williams the Acting Secretary, and Robin Weare the Acting Treasurer.

I look forward to my 70th birthday party which is actually on the day of next Council meeting. There will be a cake!

Andy Eavis, BCA Chairman - January 2018

DISCUSSION:

Rick Halliwell is looking at reviewing the constitution and a couple of meetings had taken place - RH is happy to tidy up Constitution and will have some preliminary ideas for the AGM. DC asked if the changes would be voted on or reviewed? AE said RH would put forward a paper to be circulated, and whilst we

needed to respect that the timeframe would be long, it would be thorough. TA asked what RH's remit was and who he would be talking to – cited last discussion on two different approaches - tweaking vs overhauling – AE suggested that when we have finished the Constitutional changes from the last ballot, then we will then give RH the constitution with some, as yet, unconfirmed guidelines – suggested TA put forward some ideas if he wished. AE reiterated that this process was currently more for cleaning up inconsistencies – but if people want to input then by all means, they should go ahead.

TA asked if the Newsletter could be used to get people to send in their ideas, AE agreed, AB asked if this was another decade of navel gazing – AE said more like 18 months and to make haste slowly as RH is the right person to do the job properly. AE said TA bringing up point suggests we do need time. DC asked to bring brief to next meeting. AE said that may be possible. AE asked if the Newsletter could invite members to look at current constitution and submit their thoughts. In terms of timing, AE stated that something would definitely be ready for the next AGM, but not next Council meeting.

TA asked if the other aspect that was discussed, that of a wider vision, was still in the long grass and there had been no real conclusion – AE said wholesale changes are open to discussion, put it forward.

NW stated that when the Constitution was worked on in early 90's it was a huge effort, and most of that effort was getting everyone together first in order for everyone to understand what they get from it and what the impact would be - and then sell to everyone who will have a vote. That is why large changes would be a lot of work. In the meantime, there are inconsistencies which need ironing out and RH was focused on those inconsistencies. For something broader, you need to be prepared to put in the work to put the visions forward.

AB mentioned that about every 10 years we have to do this – are we in the situation of if it ain't broke don't fix it, just tweak? Not necessarily a wholesale change, just tweak it so it works better?

NW replied that all those with a different vision - it's up to them to sell that vision of it.

DC: TA brings up a good point that we were discussing the aims of the organisation and it is work clarifying those aims independent of the Constitution, and that Mission statements had been mentioned. AE said we need to tackle the howling anomalies. Aims and objectives are separate. DC and TA said that's what we were asking.

NW said we as an organisation (the Executive) are not envisioning a grand new vision, but if someone else wants to do that, they are welcome to take it on. TA said need to make it clear to the membership we are just tweaking. NW said we aren't stopping anyone from doing a grand vision if they want to do the work. TA said just wanted to make sure membership were clear about what was being done. Things were talked about last time as visionary rather than constitutional.

AE: Unless anyone has any comments, we can move on.

REPORT:

7. Secretary (Acting) - Nick Williams

Including: Membership Administrator's Report – Wendy Williams

1. I am pleased to report that the annual insurance renewal went without a hitch. The Chairman and I had a short but productive meeting with Richard Doubleday of Howdens in mid-December and he confirmed a recommendation to move the core policy from Brit Syndicate to Hiscox. The result is a slightly lower total premium for BCA. Cover, excesses and limits remain the same.

One thing we did agree was the need to clarify the extent of property (land and buildings) on risk under the policy and so questions relating to this have been added to the 2018 membership renewal form circulated in December.

At our October meeting, Council will need to consider whether we want to raise the limit of indemnity from £5m to £10m. This will cost in the region of £8k. Please take this back to your constituent body and come to the meeting prepared to discuss and make a decision.

2. I attended, with the Chairman, a specially convened meeting of the QMC in December which was intended to discuss the matter of revalidations for awards which was also covered at the last Council meeting. A couple of weeks previously I had also attended, with the QMC Chair, a meeting on the same topic at the annual conference of the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres. For context, organisations run by AHOEC members employ about 25% of the total of award scheme holders directly and engage many others on a subcontract basis. They have a very good understanding of the wants and needs of particularly the Local Cave and Mine Leader award holders, most of whom are fairly junior outdoor education staff. Council should also note that all centres offer a broad range of outdoor activities and caving is usually a lesser part of this, especially where the senior staff in the centre are not themselves cavers.

As a result of the meetings I have changed my view as expressed at the Council meeting in October 17. While I remain of the view that anything which is referred to as a 'revalidation' implies some form of assessment which must logically require a 'pass' or 'fail' decision, I now understand the AHOEC position which is (to simplify it to its most basic level) that continuing professional development would be much more useful to them than a pass/fail assessment. I am also of the view that the QMC is quite capable of taking this forward without needing to be directed by Council and as such I propose that we withdraw the direction to QMC that re-validations be in the form of a pass/fail assessment and instead leave QMC to bring forward a process which meets what they see as the needs of the candidates and their employers while maintaining standards which BCA can be proud to put its name to.

3. I also need to note that at the meeting in December, Graham Mollard resigned his post as QMC Chair. Phil Baker, Graham's deputy, has agreed to take over the role in an acting capacity. I would like to place on record my appreciation of the immense effort which Graham put into getting the QMC off the ground and hope Council will join me in this. Council and the wider BCA need to continue to support the Awards which are well respected in the outdoor education industry and allow BCA to influence this sector in a way which would not be possible if we did not maintain the schemes. They are the point of contact for by far the largest number of non-cavers with our sport.

4. Some Council members will be aware that Blah d Blah, a company wholly owned by the controlling shareholder in the Pathfinder group, which includes Tahdah, was placed in Creditors Voluntary Liquidation. Tahdah Verified Ltd, the company from which we had been considering purchasing the

integrated database system for the training award schemes, continues to trade. I will defer to our Treasurer for an assessment of the impact of the administration of Blah-de-Blah on Tahdah, but for the present any further negotiations with Tahdah are on hold. No money has changed hands between the BCA and any company in the Pathfinder group.

While I am sure that we are right to review our possible relationship with Tahdah in the light of this, I would like to ensure it remains on Council's radar that getting on and sorting out a database for the QMC should be a priority. I know that it is tempting to say that this was 'urgent' 5 years ago and the fact that it remains 'urgent' today indicates that maybe it wasn't so urgent after all, but this illustrates a profound contempt for the hard work put in by, in particular, our Training Administrator who has to deal with the current barely functional system on a daily basis.

5. On the recreational side, I participated in (on line) Training Committee meetings in September and December. The Training Officer will doubtless report separately on these but one point Council did not resolve at our meeting in October was that of administrative support for the Training Committee. TC used to have administrative support in the form of a paid administrator but that role has now moved to QMC and the individual concerned may not wish to add the Training Committee workload. In order to move this forward, I propose that The Treasurer and Ac. Secretary be empowered by Council to agree a budget and resources for administrative support with the Training Committee.

6. I have had no volunteers or offers of help with the post of Child Protection Officer. This post urgently needs to be filled: it is a topic which our new insurers are rightly concerned about and I have declined to complete a questionnaire on the topic as part of the renewal process since the information required by the insurers was not at my disposal. While I am confident that our failure to properly maintain the post will not have an effect on our cover in the short term, it will make us look less than professional in the longer term. I also note that the responsibility is wider than just child protection. I propose that we re-name the position to 'Safeguarding Officer'.

7. CCC have sent me a proposed policy document on single entrance caves which is attached to this report (Addendum 1). Council will need to decide what to do with this.

8. I am grateful to Tim Allen for his letter (Addendum 2) which was circulated via the Council Mailing list on 31 December since I think it is important that Council have advance warning of this topic rather than it be bounced into the discussion on the day.

I need to place on record that I think Tim's characterisation of the circumstances surrounding the resignation of the previous Legal and Insurance Officer fails to accurately reflect the relationship between Bob Mehew and the Executive but I'd suggest there is little value in wasting more of Council's time on that matter in this meeting.

As I see it, Tim's letter raises two important but separate issues. The first of these is that Council did not make a clear resolution on the matters raised in my report with regard to the changes to the position of Legal and Insurance Officer and the second is the choice of the individual concerned. I leave the second matter for discussion but in response to the first, I repeat the proposals made to the meeting in October:

I propose that:

*That the post of Legal and Insurance Officer be deleted from Council agendas;
That insurance related matters be the remit of an officer co-opted by Council;*

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.

9. Finally, please note that I am away in Mulu from 9 to 31 January and so after the close of this meeting I will not be responding to or taking action on any of the above, or anything else BCA related, until February at the earliest.

Nick Williams, Acting Secretary - 2 January 2018

DISCUSSION:

NW began with the question on whether or not BCA should move to a higher level of indemnity for their insurance – 10 mil as opposed to the current 5 mil. The brokers were pushing for the higher level, but he wasn't sure if the increase in premiums was worth it, and what did the regions think?

LW said Longleat was insisting on a 10 mil minimum. NW noted that it's likely the Chatsworth estate would also require the higher amount – and at present there were already other sites that did not allow access because the landowner was not willing to accept 5mil indemnity level. At the time of last renewal negotiations, the additional premium had been deemed to not be worth it for the small amount access lost, but that may well change. LW said he just wanted it noted that this had been the discussion with Longleat, and it was ongoing. NW stated that it would be a group decision.

DJ said there were similar issues with mine access and asked if premium wasn't going to go up anyway. NW said we may have to put it even higher than just the allowing for inflation if we were to add the additional cover. AR made the point that if we are trying to encourage access, surely having fewer caves is not good. NW said this is a decision that needs to be engaged with by everyone, not just the insurance officer.

JP said they need to know what the implications were for raising the subscription level - so they can tell if asking members to add £1.50 would have any impact.

NW pointed out that he was not going to argue with the benefits of moving to 10 mil indemnity, especially with regards to places such as Reservoir Hole and other caves on the south side of Cheddar, which LW are currently in negotiation over a new agreement with, but the point was that we are currently committed to a 5 mil limit for the duration of the present contract, and to change it at this point would mean drawing £8,000 from reserves, and was that worth it?

AB asked if there was a possibility that LW could return to the negotiations and imply that the higher level was on the cards at the point of next insurance renewal without being too specific as to when that was. LW said it was Longleat which was driving the issue over access & indemnity levels and they were trying to be as positive as possible over it. NA suggested that LW should be able to go back to the negotiations being able to say that the question of level had been raised with the Executive

AB asked if we are prepared to lose access to Reservoir Hole or can we just agree now? AE said we can defer decision. AB said are we happy to go to 10mil as a general rule. SF said if we do have to go to 10m, we should anticipate this as it seems to be the way it is all going and adding an additional £1.50 to subscriptions seems like a no brainer in order to keep access. SF said common sense can win out and

possibly use the probably change to the upper limit for next time in current negotiations. But we should agree to it now.

NW said he did not feel that proposal should come from him.

TA asked if specific insurance for regions was possible? NW said have done in past for specific events such as Hidden Earth but the present insurer would insist on a flat 10 mil policy otherwise. TA said can we ask? NW said we can ask for 10 mil pro tem.

JP said in view of fact that CSCC is worried about losing access, then Chatsworth Estate would be a big loss. If we can put off raising the actual level until next year we should, but we should also authorise the Executive to be able to give emergency authority and ratify that at next meeting. NW said he fears that may weaken CNCC (?) position. LW said he can just say BCA is looking at this, but if Longleat says no, then we will have to make a decision, and that JP and AB's suggestion to authorise, if necessary, is a good one. AE said it could go to next Council meeting, not next AGM. AB said may be good enough to say BCA will increase at next renewal – NW said that pre-empts the discussion he was expecting in October. AR asked why not authorise it now so BCA can go ahead if needed.

PROPOSAL:

That the Executive is authorised to go ahead with an increase in the insurance indemnity level from its current 5mil to 10mil, if needed in an emergency Otherwise, the insurance is left at present level until the agreed renewal discussion time.

Proposed: AB

Seconded: AE

Objections: None

NW stated that he had received an approach over the vacant Child Protection role, but that had raised questions on how council goes about appointing people under these circumstances. What would the Council like to do? We have already done this with Mark for the Equipment Officer role, which was not controversial. TA said the problem was with not telling council who these people are – what's the harm in saying people have put themselves forward – who they actually are is a consideration.

NW said he was hoping to have a discussion about how, in principle, Council goes about reviewing the application process and that would not need specific names. TA said shouldn't that person come and attend a meeting? NW said that's exactly the kind of comment he was after, is that what council wants? TA said Mark Sims could have been ratified at this meeting (apologies sent) and council is mostly made of elected officials who work to a proposal. AE pointed out that the approach for the Child Protection role had only happened the night before the meeting, so they hadn't had time to do anything about these positions, but, going forward, if someone wants to stand, does someone come to a meeting and introduce themselves?

SF said it should be the same as for Clubs – information needs circulating in advance.

NW: Moving on to the next point, which relates to QMC, he would like to move straight to proposal (*in*

report) there. TA said, on behalf of Andrew Hinde, he has been asked several times in his role to stand as QMC and he still has not had an invitation to this meeting - if you want him to stand, he needs to be invited. NW said he agreed with this and there had been some misunderstanding on what the meeting actually was, as stated in his report - but for now wants to focus on ongoing development of professional caving. Are we prepared to vote, as is, on the proposal?

NW: Key to this is that we had a sheet that identified revalidation, so that could go to centres if they needed it, which meant people could see if they were deficient in skills. QMC needs to make that decision

SN said happy with anything that puts QMC in charge of rewards and makes sure the collective voice is taken into account. AE: Very happy with positive feedback and feelings from QMC meeting. NW agreed that the centres were very positive. TA asked if all was broadly supported by those in training.

It was then clarified that the ex-Chairman DID NOT resign due to this issue.

LW: At the last meeting we were told that a CIC was not competent and there did not seem to be a mechanism to make them competent. What measures are in place now? SN: The person should not have been on that course. NW stated that he didn't think it was as straightforward as a stick-and-carrot CBD process. LW said his only concern was that Council wasn't being put into a difficult position. NW/SN replied that this was in discussion.

NA: With regards to the revalidation – candidates liked the reworking and 'update' had watered it down. What training facility didn't know was that cert could be withheld. What was lacking was a communication bridge between QMC and Exec. NA said processes are now going back into place to make sure it's not going to happen again. LW replied he was happy, as long as all are happy that proposal ticks boxes for all joining up together and it is not putting the Council in the firing line. SN said he feels running of QMC will be a lot smoother as former Chair had not been in alignment with most of QMC. NA said it will be fine and will not happen.

PROPOSAL:

I propose that we withdraw the direction to QMC that re-validations be in the form of a pass/fail assessment and instead leave QMC to bring forward a process which meets what they see as the needs of the candidates and their employers while maintaining standards which BCA can be proud to put its name to.

Proposed: NW

Seconded: SN, NA

In favour: All

Opposed: None

NW: I do want to give credit to Graham for vast amounts of work put into QMC. It might not have all worked out but we should acknowledge the work – *this was met with general agreement.*

NW we need to decide what to do, even if it's nothing, what to do with TahDah.

TA asked if there wasn't another option on the table - why don't we just forget about Tahdah and go for

something else? AE said this could probably be the answer but Tahdah is considerably better than other present options, just financially dodgy.

DC said yes, technically best by quite a margin, but other options would need a lot of work.

AE said another option would be an entirely different solution with other problems - SF asked to just clarify who the contracts were with. NW said another option would be a huge person and time investment without being as slick as TahDah - which could be detrimental to overall user experience. Not an easy decision.

RW: His position with TahDah, back in October was to reluctantly withdraw his opposition as TahDah had received a finance offer, plus an offer to take over Blah D Blah, including a debt exchange situation. Had either of those happened, TahDah would have been financially secure for at least a couple of years. HMRC put together a winding up petition and the bank got involved so Blah D Blah tried to come to a creditors voluntary arrangement, shortly after last council meeting but creditors turned it down and put them into liquidation controlled by creditors. Financial situation of Blah D Blah was assets of £225,000, of which £220,000 due from TahDah or parent company. Liquidators job is to recover money owing and pay off creditors, which total approximately £400K – so current assets won't pay all off. RW said if he were liquidator he would be seeking to put TahDah and Pathfinder into liquidation and then expect assets to be sold on as a going concern... if TahDah is sold on as a going concern, that would be great and we should go for it, as the TahDah product seems to be the right product.

AE: Timescale?

RW: Could be quite long, as litigation involved.

NW said there was no possibility of investing in a financial basket case, but the concern is if we go for alternative route it will involve a LOT more effort before we can get an outcome that's as good as TahDah.

SF said there is no choice, it's gone bust.

RW/NW said no it hasn't. NW said alternative is going to involve much more work and we need to be careful that we get what we need – so we would need to spend more time on a plan and specification with the alternative. The decision would have to be do we now do the planning for the alternative? If TahDah is a viable solution at the end of that great but making the decision to just spend on Northbridge right now would be wrong.

SF: AE said we already have something in place. SF asked why we can't just mend what we have now. DC said we can amend it now, but the timescales are very long and possibly too long to be acceptable. NW agreed that we need to move to something. TA said administrator had said possibility of leaving if we don't do something. TA said BCA would end up looking embarrassed if we went with TahDah and it failed. AE said Mary is happy to go on if things are being changed.

AE: We should put a timescale on it to see what is happening by next meeting/AGM - do we go for currently poor alternative, use TahDah or put in work to fix poor alternative? TA stated that the current problem was with juggling three incompatible databases.

NW: Need to work out how to come up with an alternative to TahDah and *if* TahDah becomes a viable option in the future, we can go with it. DC said there was benefit to waiting for next meeting to see what happens with TahDah but to use the time to put a spec together for Northbridge – that would cost money, but at least it moves forward, rather than just waiting. There are other potential solutions that could also be looked at.

SF asked why the three databases weren't being mended? DC said fixing databases could be done but what became apparent is that we need a much bigger system than just three databases. TahDah would have provided the whole lot and good interface too. NW pointed out that we would not get that just by fixing the databases. SF said not suggesting that, but something to help Mary. NW asked if DC could fix databases to help keep Mary's job manageable? DC said yes, that could be done. NW asked if we could have a plan for that to do at next meeting, to which SF queried, why not now? In principle at least, if not in detail. We need to do something to make improvements for Mary's position as administrator so if DC can fix it so let's just do it. DC pointed out that nothing could realistically happen there before March. NW said could we get Northbridge to look at doing for a sum? AE has spoken to Mary, she understands what the situation is, if unhappy with it.

SF: In principle, how do we sort this out? There is a deficit here – a Board level decision on how we do something about it. NW said a Board level decision is all very well but who carries that out? It has to come back to DC as he is the only one who has that knowledge. There was agreement that it will have to keep until March. JP said Mary was not thinking of resigning, she is just frustrated at not being able to do her job to its best ability because of the tools. If she is given an assurance that something is going to be done, just that there is timeframes and progress, she would be content for now.

LW: Shall we move forward by agreeing a budget and that DC holds it until March? AE: Let's defer until the April meeting.

NW: Moving on...

Recreational training – details will come later but NA has questioned Training committee support for admin. Can Council ratify proposal to help Training Committee have some paid admin support, no different to any other special committee. LW asked if paid support wasn't always for commercial schemes, can we have a paid admin support for ALL committees not just commercial? NA said doesn't need support currently and not envisioning big spend, just want to know in principle that it's there if needed. LW: It's been discussed and had become apparent that some of Committees are slow at getting minutes out as dependent on volunteers – they should be looking at removing volunteer workload by having someone paid for minuting. A minutes coordinator, rather than relying on others to have to fit in wherever.

AE said clerical assistance could be available if needed. LW said that's all he wanted.

PROPOSAL:

I propose that The Treasurer and Ac. Secretary be empowered by Council to agree a budget and resources for administrative support with the Training Committee

Proposed: NW

Seconded: NA

DC asked to modify to ALL committees, not just Training committees.

NW agreed.

All in favour: All bar one

RW voted against – due to money being spent which is not in the budget. Therefore, votes against.

Noted. NA agreed committee should be asked to justify the spend on it.
NW said RW's point is entirely valid.

AB said the point is that as much pressure as possible is taken off volunteers. NA agreed with this.

NW: Moving on to Item 6, I have now had a contact about Child Protection officer. AE mentioned that it looked good. NW said will take that forward. NA asked what the role involves – NW said good question, - an organisation which has clubs with young and vulnerable people, needed someone in place to handle those contacts. NA said he could take that on as part of his role, if required. NW said we need to be seen to be helping our clubs as BCA itself doesn't deal with those vulnerable people – and the new insurer required someone specifically in post. AB spoke about a 14-page report from a person in place, which was too much – needed to make sure policy was robust but not restrictive. The policy was written by someone in child protection and was to the point of being overly restrictive for practical use.

AE said let's let NA work with the person who is offering to come on board. AB stated that a National Body needs a broad policy which can help, not hinder. TA asked why the person stepping forward for the role couldn't be named.

NA said put him directly in touch. AE replied with "fair enough". SF said British Mountaineering Council tend to be way ahead on admin, so why don't we just find out what they have done? NW said we already have something adopted, we are just not doing well by it for our members. SF said let's look at their (BMC) policy documents.

NW: With regards to the paper from Cambrian Caving Council, it was disappointing Andrew was not present as he could comment on best procedure for dealing with this. Answer was that BCA has a clear policy already. RW asked why Cambrian had asked for this to come to this meeting. Allan Richardson replied that it was basically to do with ongoing problems with a cave in their system – he hadn't actually been down the cave in question but have a lot of big systems in Wales and, on the whole, they have more than one entrance. Some feel caves should only have one, some feel they should have lots – they are saying it should be a happy medium. RW said, constitutionally, we can't do a great amount, but it has been noted.

NW: With the next point, TA and NW had had a discussion and it was obvious that procedure had not been clear. It needed to be clarified that TA wrote the letter at NW's request, as the matter needed to be raised before the Council meeting and that they have had representations from two individuals, Derbyshire Caving and CNCC. So, first of all, can we debate the proposal in italics?

JP said she seconds it. LW said we should just go for the vote. The issues are the appointment of the person not the role split. TA said nothing here about the 'gatekeeper' role discussed. LW said we are just talking about role split. TA asked are you talking about paid position or volunteer? NW said simply talking about panel of practising legal professions, but they would not be council officers or have to go to meetings. We got tied up in halfway house discussion which made it less clear on the role.

AE: We don't need a gatekeeper, LW said the matter had been confused by that proposition. DC asked if we would normally be paying them? NW & AE: No – we have a number of cavers in the legal profession who we can draw on. We could pay if we needed.

TA said would like to discuss more for clarity, and that we can't ignore objections to who is being appointed. Will the membership know who those people are to be appointed? RW asked if all volunteers would have to be approved? AB said it was getting ridiculous. LW said Linda Wilson is not a practising legal professional.

SH: Asked about the issue of clarity on who is appointed and what does that actually mean? NW said there would be a list and people could see it. Maybe appoint was the wrong word.

TA said we were looking at moving from a role of an appointed single person to no single named person – there is a pool to draw from.

NW stated that it does away with role of Legal Officer and places that role with the Executive. SF said we should go in that direction and should buy in legal advice from appropriate professionals as needed for different issues. NW said he would like advice on trustee issues, for example.

SN stated that they should not just be practising and current but indemnified. NW said that's why he had used that wording and LW said if they are practicing they would be indemnified. DC then asked, if you have a task like rewriting policies, who do you give that task to? NW said not sure we have ever seen Legal Officers role to write policies of all legal remits – they have just simply done it – but appointing a range of people brings a different perspective and also produces useful, meaningful documents instead of legalese.

AR/SF both felt there was a problem with word "appoint" – and suggested instead "seek advice from as matters arise"? TA can we slightly phrase it to make it clear the Executive is taking over that responsibility. LW said it already says that, Execs have taken on duties of Officer.

NW: Replace appoint with Use or Identify. AE /AR seek advice from. Seek opinions from.

LW Take out 'to appoint' and replace with 'seek out the opinion of' instead.

AB said if I don't like the current advisors, how do I protest that? If you have a list of firms/people you normally go to how do you state who you don't use. AE said there will be a list. Protests can be lodged.

PROPOSAL

To take out 'to appoint' and replace with 'As required, the Executive seek the opinion of one, or more, currently practising legal professional for legal matters, as they arise'

Proposed: NW

Seconded: Badger

All in favour of proposal as amended.

None against, no abstains

NW: Do we need to discuss the second part, having made that decision? Probably not. TA said we need to clarify seeing as there has been some bad feeling. JP replied that the letters had been written on what had appeared to be public perception of what was likely to happen, but as that has now proved to be incorrect, the letters can stand, but things were not quite what was seemed at the time of writing.

RW said it bothered him that anyone who is not wholly acceptable as in favour of the CRoW campaign is not acceptable as a council member. RW said he has made it clear he is not in favour of CRoW and would you like him to resign. The entire room simultaneously told him no, they wanted him to stay.

NW said there was a view on change, as a result of info in an email Linda Williams had sent to Defra showed a clear conflict of interest. Linda had accepted there was a conflict of interest and we were simply not clear enough in asking Linda -we have moved beyond that point now. TA said RW had made his position clear to not support CRoW but he had never seen RW actively working behind the scene to try to derail it. Whereas Linda was actively campaigning against it. DC said he supports RW and council should be big enough to support different views.

TA said he volunteered to act as CRoW Officer and he has done a lot of work in line with council and also, where the membership has been asked by ballot, the membership had supported that. He felt that it was him against other people and if someone was actively campaigning against council position it was contra to all interests.

NW said there was a confusion over the role itself... that TA's concern is legitimate but it would not have been relevant to what NW and AE were trying to do.

SF said there if there is a clear conflict of interest between a council members personal views and their council role, if something arises that shows someone may be biased, it is legitimate to ask someone to leave the room You can accommodate all views and comments in a democracy but you should withdraw if you have a clear conflict.

AB: Just because BCA has a policy, doesn't mean you have to agree with it.

AE: Yes. Lunch.

AB: Where's the cake?

BREAK

Meeting recommended after very nice cake, courtesy of the Chairman's 70th Birthday

- Membership Administrator's Report – Wendy Williams

First of all, I would like to thanks everyone for their help, patience and support over the last 3 months. At the end of December 31st 2017 BCA Membership stands at:

DIMs = 116

Groups = 10

CIMs = 529

These are DIMs and Club Applications processed up to midnight on December 31st

There will be an up to date list available at the Meeting

There are 3 New Clubs who would like to join BCA this Meeting

1. Shark Speleological Society

2. *Former Explorers of Kent University*
3. *Peak District Mines Historical Society*

Wendy Williams, Membership Administrator - January 2018

Additional information regarding BCA DIM Memberships:

There has been a slight delay in sending out the BCA DIM renewal letters, but they have been printed and will be mailed on 6 Jan. however, a number of people (getting on for 100) have renewed without waiting to be reminded.

The reasons for the delay were many and varied but included a decision to do a thorough check of the data, and a decision to "sync up" the online renewal form to the BCA online database. With hindsight, both those actions should have been done earlier or postponed. There is no indication that next year's renewals will be delayed.

David Gibson

DISCUSSION:

Wendy Williams then presented the Membership report.

WW: Clubs are being dealt with on first-come-first-served basis. Any renewals received that are incorrect are being queried in order to ensure they are accurate for next year.

Paper renewal reminders went out in today's (6/01/2018) post - a problem was hit but now sorted. Email renewals have already gone out. 163 DIMS (out of 769) renewed without any reminder prompt. WW stated she is dealing with what she knows at the moment and will tackle more as confidence is built.

NA: The issue of award scheme members being members of BCA has never really been clarified, need to get Phil to focus on QMC recommendations on paid section of this. Needs to be reinforced with SN. As an aside, one of the TahDah benefits would be being able to more readily manage this and keep in contact with members beyond just renewal.

REPORT:

8. Treasurer (Acting) - Robin Weare

Having spent much of the time since the last Council meeting on holiday I've occupied the last few weeks by bringing the book-keeping up to date.

The 1-year term deposit with Cambridge & Counties Bank has matured and, as they failed to offer an equivalent term for reinvestment a decision was taken to open a 1-year term account with United Trust Bank at 1.5%. As is usual with a new account it has taken forever to deal with the necessary administration and funds will be transferred as soon as the account is open.

During the next few months much of my available time will be taken with the 2017 year end process and the preparation and scrutiny of the accounts. It will greatly assist with this task if outstanding invoices and claims relating to 2017 could be chased up if necessary and submitted without delay.

I am still searching for a suitably qualified replacement and ask Council members to keep this in mind whenever they speak to a caver with a background in accountancy.

Robin Weare, Treasurer (Acting) – Jan 2018

DISCUSSION:

RW: Usually I have nothing much to add, but firstly an apology, and a thank you to Tim. Rare... but the only person who noticed and told me I paid out travel expenses at the wrong rate. Apologies to all who were overpaid but I will be getting that back from this set of expenses. How embarrassing!

On the question of a new treasurer, I did have one more expression of interest, but sadly they declined to take it further after thinking about it. Some good news - NW handed me a communication from HMRC which told me that the last 12 months of negotiation have been successful and have managed to recover all of the tax BCA has paid back to 2013. It's unlikely we are going to have to pay tax again. Sadly, we could not go back to inception, but it was a good win. It was about £500/600 pounds. LW said this alone was proof we don't need a new Treasurer!

RW said that what it does prove, and he says with some hesitation, is we do need a Treasurer with a professional accountancy background, if not a qualification. A couple of things that RW has done during his tenure have involved knowing what he was about and that was one example, but he is too old... *(disagreement in general on that and getting rid of him!) ... I need someone younger in this job, please will you all think about possible candidates? If you know of anyone, have a word and pass details to RW. AE asked that they won't be put off like last time! RW said he would always be honest about what taking the role on means.

RW - final point, we left the position of Scrutineer open at the AGM to be filled by Council. The existing one had asked to be replaced - RW has tried a few people and again no success yet, but one person didn't say no fast enough – Paul Ibberson, a previous Treasurer. LW said he hesitated to put forward someone, as they are not here, but Ruth King is the Wessex Scrutineer and may be worth approaching. RW said we do need one appointed, LW replied there was only one meeting left to do it. RW said he would like it to happen before then, as it would give the Scrutineer time to deal with it. AE said Paul Ibberson seemed like the obvious candidate as he knows his way around the system. RW agreed, as this had been a big problem for the last Scrutineer.

PROPOSAL: Appoint Paul Ibberson as Scrutineer this year

Proposed: RW/AE

Seconded: TR

In Favour: All

Against: None

SF then asked about number of transactions. RW replied to email and they would discuss further.

REPORT:

9. Conservation & Access Officer - Andrew Hinde **Including: CRoW-Liaison Officer Report - Tim Allen**

Work on a first draft of a BCA policy statement on CRoW and Caving is underway.

I have booked onto the UNESCO Cave and Karst Conference in the Ardeche, (6th/9th March 18) where I hope to present a short lecture on UK cave conservation projects. Nothing further to report.

Andrew Hinde, Conservation & Access Convenor – Jan 2018

DISCUSSION:

Delivered by AE in absence of AH:

AE: The conference in the Ardeche is looking good and has been widely circulated so may be worth attending. TA noted dates were an unfortunate clash.

- CRoW-Liaison Officer Report - Tim Allen

Dear Council

I hope you all enjoyed my article posted on UKcaving entitled “the long fight for rights”. At the time of writing this report it had received nearly 3000 views and favourable comments. The article noted the Ramblers latest campaign for public access to woodland and acknowledged the lengthy battle for any public access to the countryside at all. I did enjoy one comment which suggested that if basic access rights to the countryside, such as the establishment of National Parks, was to be enacted today it would still be opposed by landowners and conservationists who would see free access as detrimental. Just as with our own battle now, it appears to be an uneven balance of the wishes and freedoms of the many against the wishes and concerns of the few.

Also appearing in the media was an article in the Sunday Times on 19th November entitled “Potholers fight for the right to dangle”. The article, written by Nicholas Hellen, was well reported and focused on aspects of the Three Counties System as well as the CRoW access campaign. The effect of having our cause publicised in this type of media is immeasurable but it is sure to have been seen in high places. Accompanied by Mark Burkey’s people’s choice award winning photo from the Kendal Mountain Festival it is sure to be good for caving in general.

I also attended the BMC Mend Our Mountains - Raise One Million event at Westminster. Our chairman, myself and our two wives attended as guests of both the BMC and our insurers Howdens. This is a fine cause and council will remember we supported the previous crowd funded campaign which achieved its goals and raised £103,000 to repair specific high level footpaths. I would suggest we offer a healthy donation to this campaign too.

The event gave the opportunity to rub shoulders with those who have a keen interest in the outdoors. I established some further contacts and was able to set up a few meetings with some of the other attendees with a view to promoting the image of caving. Of the seven speakers at the event only Alan Hinkes mentioned caving. Jane then ‘worked the room’ to ensure that the other six were fully aware of the value of caving in our National Parks by the end. Ruth George, MP for the High Peak, who hosted the event would be happy to meet with cavers locally (DCA rep please note).

There is one point to clarify from the last minutes. A proposal was passed that “the BCA confirms that it supports the view that the CRoW Act already applies to caving”. Some discussion followed and a second proposal passed that “C&A committee to prepare a draft policy statement, kept as brief and meaningful as possible, that the BCA believes, with good reason that the CRoW Act, as-is, applies to caving”. My reading of the meeting was that the second proposal was in addition to the first. The notes in the minutes (in bold type) may suggest that the first proposal is conditional on the second or a replacement of the first. This requires clarity as the length of time policy statements can take would seem unjustified and an unnecessary delay on agreeing the first proposal.

I do find it frustrating that I feel I have to fight against often unseen hands, for every acknowledgement of support for the BCA CRoW campaign and a positive BCA position on CRoW. This despite the open votes at council supporting my actions, the membership vote at the poll and the ballot, which all give BCA a very strong mandate on this position.

Tim Allen, CRoW Liaison Officer – Jan 2018

DISCUSSION:

TA: The press article that you have put me on to, Andy, I’m sure everyone understand show the press works but that guy phoned me up for at least an hour the first time, then again, on all sorts of different tracks, for probably a total of three and a half hours No matter how careful you are, you can never be sure of what the end result will be. I think it came out fairly well, but it could have been very different even if I had said exactly the same things to him – so if something comes out on CRoW in the future and it’s not presented as well as his article is, it’s not that I’m changing my words, but it’s how the reporter presents it. I thought he would flag up the RGS weekend in London but then the actual article never mentioned it! AE: Background is, he is not an easy person to deal with. AE sent him (journalist) an email to praise article and got a positive reply. TA said just mentioning, as an example of how their minds work, that a photo of the 3 caves system had won a category prize at the Kendal mountain festival - so TA linked the photo as an example of what sort of shot to use – and from there on no other photo would do But then on the third discussion it turned out it was a completely different system to the narrative... and the reporter the asked if TA could be quoted about linking a totally irrelevant system! TA had to come up with a plausible sentence to link them together – so often, it’s not what’s said it’s what’s reported.

The other thing was the Westminster function we went to. Last year I had some dealings with the BMC about CRoW and AE & AH met with some of their officials. From that, there have been some emails with the Mend Our Mountains campaign, and we agreed to donate £400 towards it, repairing high level footpaths across the National Parks – have now got to raise 1mil with corporate and crowd funding but because we had contributed and have a small relationship because of this, we got invited to the Mend Our Mountains campaign. Just goes to show a little bit of generosity can include an invitation to something where you end up talking to some fairly influential individuals on both commercial and political side of things. With that in mind, we should maybe send another small donation.

RW: There was a budget for CRoW, still some there less expenses for meeting. AE agreed money well spent, about £500ish, not more. RW said spending Crow Budget was up to TA to decide if it’s coming out of his budget. No need to discuss it. AE asked if TA would mention Ruth George. TA said someone from the Peak District should get in touch with her and take her caving. AE said she would be very interested. LW: Take her to an interesting cave! TA said AE’s daughter in law took previous MP caving, and probably any caving area should talk to relevant MP in case of any issues arising, especially for things like cave

rescue arising. Always good to get them interested beforehand.

AE reiterated Ruth George would be very interested. TA said David Rutley had a very memorable day out. NW pointed out he was a politician.... LW said should take all MP's caving.

TA: there's a couple of things that aren't on the report that I'd like to reflect on - firstly the CSCC. Alan, I know your views and I was wondering if it would be helpful if I came down to one of your meetings as both BCA Crow Liaison or CNCC officer and see if we can find some common ground where we don't need to get into disputes. Alan said 16th Feb next meeting, and TA would be very welcome. TA said if he was happy with it. AB said take it as an official invite. Apparently, meeting is the 17th.... Corrected by WW.

TA: On a slightly wider issue, I sometimes feel that if we are now trying to run some sort of campaign that has come down to me, acknowledging help from AE, JP and previously Bob (Mehew). Being slightly influenced by the success of Youth and Dev, could we set up a CRoW campaign group where we could maybe take on different roles and involve people from around the country – Cambrian territory for example, or possibly Mendip. Wonder if I could look into forming a group – Jenny's CRoW working group has sort of dissolved and there were people who had an interest in it and moving it along. I don't want to be doing this until my dying day and am aware this all rests with one person – so by having other people involved this would help. Do I need to make a proposal that I establish a CRoW campaign group or can I just do one, or do you not want me to form one?

AE: I think you can do as you see fit in your role as CRoW Liaison Officer – it would be somewhat informal - it would be more difficult if it were to be made formal. The majority of our membership want us to campaign towards CRoW and we owe it to our membership to get that clarified. I don't think it should be a problem if you want to get some people to help you.

TA: Feel Council should be seen to be supporting Crow more definitely.

NW replied, as mentioned last meeting - we need a plan. How are you going to do this? TA: We need a group to come up with a plan. NW: If you put together a group and they come up with a plan, then Council will try to support you. Council will not put together the plan. TA: Youth and Dev set up a group that was fairly informal: NW said that came about from Rostams inconsistency between position and group. LW: Formal means you would have to set up a working party within BCA constitution, informal means you can format a group and just get on with it. A working party and formal group would give strength to a specific point. TA: It's about getting help.

RW: You don't need a proposal to form a group

AR: We need to make it clear to the Membership that we are doing something.

PROPOSAL

That Council supports CRoW Liaison Officer in establishing CRoW campaign group of interested cavers to support the CRoW Campaign.

Proposed by: TA

Seconded: AE

All in favour: All

Against None

AB abstained CSCC

REPORT:

10. Equipment & Techniques Officer – Mark Sims (Acting)

Including: Rope Testing Officer - Bob Mehew

After discussing the vacant role of E&T committee chair with Nick Williams last year, I agreed to take it on. I have a reasonable background knowledge of the goings on of the E&T committee, albeit from the outside, having been a CNCC BP anchor installer, helping with the anchoring of Rowter Hole in the Peak District, and having recently been trained to install IC anchors. I am disappointed not to be able to attend the meeting, but work commitments mean I am lacking in free time in the short term. I would fully intend on attending meetings where possible in future.

From an external point of view, I view the work that the E&T committee has done to be extremely progressive, perhaps most notably in terms of the national adoption of resin anchors and the rigour of their testing and development, often well beyond manufacturer and regulatory requirements, ensuring safe anchors are available in the vast majority of popular caves nationwide. I think the impact of all the work done on the accessibility and safety of caving in the UK should not be underestimated.

I would hope that the E&T committee can continue this work, ensuring that anchors are available to regional councils and that installer training is accessible for those wanting to equip caves with resin anchors. The different approaches to anchor testing between regional councils suggests that, if possible, it may be beneficial to establish a best practice policy on testing, and recent reports of some movement in older anchors in the Dales indicate that there is a need to understand the scope of the situation, and the factors contributing to it.

Aside from the resin anchor scheme, I would hope that testing that is already underway (e.g. on temporary anchors, ropes, influence of anchor substrates) could continue, and I would welcome thoughts from any cavers on what they believe the priorities of the E&T committee should be.

Mark Sims, E&T Officer – Jan 2018

- Rope Testing Officer, Bob Mehew

Nothing further to report, at this stage, on rope testing.

DISCUSSION:

All confirmed had seen written report submitted by Mark Sims (absent)

LW: Can I just ask, does Council not have to appoint Mark Sims?

PROPOSAL

To appoint Mark Sims as Acting E & T Officer

Proposed: NW

Seconded LW

In Favour: All

No abstains

NW: He has stepped up, he will do a good job of it. TA: He is a great bloke, he will do a good job of it.

NW: Myself and Bob (Mehew) will support but not interfere, looking forward to seeing some solid work.

Rope testing: AE confirmed nothing further to report.

REPORT:

11. Legal & Insurance Officer

Including: Insurance Manager's Report- Nick Williams

Report to be discussed at meeting

- Insurance Manager's Report – Nick Williams

Please see point 1. of Secretary's Report for details

DISCUSSION:

NW: We no longer have an Insurance Officer.

PROPOSAL:

That NW takes role as Insurance Manager in interim.

Proposed by: LW

Seconded: DC

In Favour: All

No abstains

NW: I have reported sufficiently on this matter.

REPORT:

12. Publications & Information Officer Les Williams

Including: Media Liaison Officer (Andy Eavis)

Newsletter Editor's Report (David Rose)

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

- Media Liaison Officer (Andy Eavis)

We were approached by Nicholas Hellen, Social Affairs Editor of the Sunday Times. He had been put onto us by the Royal Geographical Society with reference to the RGS weekend. He was particularly keen to discuss CROW and its implications, so I referred him to our CROW Officer who had numerous discussions which resulted in a reasonable article in the Sunday Times, predominantly on caving in the three counties system.

There have been a number of further spin offs from the Royal Geographical Society weekend. The Geographical Magazine is interested in doing some cave related articles, and National Geographic are interested in putting something on their website. These things have been put on hold over the New Year holiday by journalists concerned. There may well be more to report in my next Council Media Report.

Andy Eavis, BCA Chairman - January 2018

- Newsletter Editor (David Rose)

I issued the first newsletter of my tenure. The second will be out in early February. That's all, really!

David Rose, Newsletter Editor - 21/12/2017

- Webmasters Report (David Cooke, Matt Wire, Les Williams)

Website

Between the Training Administrator and I there has been a steady stream of posts to the BCA Facebook page to keep peoples' interest. I've recently given Claire Peacey, our Clerical Assistant, editorial access to the page so that she can take the lead on this.

As requested by Council, BCA's trycaving.org.uk domain now links to Tim Allen's newtocaving domain. The trycaving website has been removed.

I would like to remind Officers that they can update virtually any part of the website themselves. If you see something that can be improved whether in your section or not, please do so.

David Cooke, Jan 2018

Web Services

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

David Cooke, Jan 2018

Additional info for P&I and Web services reports – Tim Allen, Jan 2018

Update on New to Caving

Action 233 – *Try Caving has been removed from general access and a link established to the New to Caving site. Thanks to Matt Wire for his prompt action.*

Action 232 – *The contacts page of New to Caving is undergoing redevelopment. When completed it will host a link and appropriate comment on BCA. If any new catchy BCA logo/graphics are developed as discussed at last meeting, then these will be incorporated too.*

We attended the CHECC forum and distributed NewtoCaving posters amongst the student clubs. At the Kendal Mountain Festival posters and the NewtoCaving ident featured in the caving events. If anyone is involved in events where New to Caving could be promoted please get in touch with me and I can supply material.

Other actions

Action 222

I have had no discussion on this action as of writing.

Action 223

This is in progress

Relevant to Action 229

The Sports and Recreational Alliance held a free member event on the General Data Protection Regulation. A symposium with a panel of experts on hand specifically to advise how small member

organisations like BCA deal with the new regulations. I highlighted the details several times to relevant BCA personnel – did anyone go?

Action 231

I have had no discussion on this action as of writing.

Action 234

I have had no discussion on this action as of writing.

DISCUSSION:

Media Liaison Officer

LW: I have nothing to add.

AE: My media report is just reciprocating. There will be a geographical magazine article in the fullness of time and at least one Nat Geo article.

NW: Do we need to do anything formal about Dave Roses position?

LW: Can we make him our Media officer? TA: Dave Rose sends belated apologies.

LW: Did Dave Rose not indicate he was taking on the Media Officer? NW said DC had said we shouldn't forget, Dave Rose said he was happy to become the contact but needed a default when he was away. DC pointed out AE is in post as he is a hub of information. AE said he would talk to Dave Rose. DC said there was also a separate task identified here – producing a media pack for the website. AE said DR was quite keen on getting involved with that too.

Webmaster Report:

DC: CP now has editorial access to FB and we have had a chat on posting policy, something at least once a week or more to keep it ticking over. LW: Please forward any relevant stuff to CP that may be good for posting – i.e. AGM weekend coming up in Forest of Dean. DC said Facebook page has been up for several months with a couple of hundred followers.

TA: Dave Rose said he volunteers to be a media person who can handle queries – Media Liaison Officer.

TA TO DC: Officers that can update pretty much any area of the website, does that mean me? DC: Yes, ask me for a login and then you can update like a forum or a wiki page. The idea is that it's up front and you can change it. TA: Is this also for front page news reports? I know there were queries about diary dates? DC: Diary dates are separate and you have to submit to DC or CP – can't change background or menu but you can create pages or edit pages. If you see something wrong, you can change it – technically. LW: You do have to think about BCA's official presence, so you need to think hard about what you are putting up – ensure it reflects the policy of the BCA, not the individual opinion.

AE: What's the situation on webservices? DC: Not a lot to say, it's carrying on.

TA: Not much to add on action points, got some more New to Caving posters if anyone wants it.

DC: As we are now linking to NewtoCaving, can we give the BCA logo on there more prominence?

Otherwise it just looks like another club. TA: Will try to come up with something suitable but there was some talk about redesigning the logo. DC: That may be a separate exercise but maybe just a bit more

prominent? TA: It's a modern site for anyone interested in caving. Google analytics looking successful. Handed out posters at CHECC event and asked them to display them, and at the Kendal mountain festival it was featured on the large screens - all may well have helped. DC: BCA have promoted NewToCaving... NW: got a lot of sympathy with what you say DC, and while we shouldn't forget it, maybe we don't need to discuss it more. NW: Is it up to us to present TA with material they can use? Make sure logo is useable and has some context. TA: We went through this previously - we are talking about people with limited caving experience, don't think promoting BCA on page one is necessarily appropriate – but BCA is there in list of clubs and national bodies, so anyone can find a route to BCA from the site, but I don't see it as a website as one to promote BCA. DC said think of as sponsors logo. TA: well ok, will have a look and see what we can do.

REPORT:

13. Training Officer (Acting) - Nigel Atkins

'Acting' BCA Training Officer Report January 2018

BCA Training Committee

Looking back at the last 12 months, myself and a small group of dedicated regional training officers have kept training committee afloat with regular meetings and numerous conversations by phone and email. We have flown the flag for BCA and introduced a fresh input into club training. A big thank you goes to Nick Williams who sets up these meeting on web ex and 'coaches' us on how to keep us on line. Without Nicks help in the last 12 months, we would not have been able to achieve this with such ease, thanks Nick.

BCA Training Grants

We have had more applications for training grants than ever since the word has been out that training committee is looking after recreational cavers. We now have 5 approved training events for 2018 already confirmed. This is a potential spend of up to £1,250 so far (max £250 for each event). With this in mind, it only goes to say that the grant of £2,000 per year will not be enough to see us through at this rate so now would be the time to agree more money for this. I would suggest doubling it to £4,000 if we have the funds. We may not spend it anyway but at least it would keep the machine ticking over without having to lose opportunities to support events. Having been involved with training committee for decades, I can assure BCA that the grants are taken very seriously and have supported very well organised and run training events all over the UK.

We have also spoken about BCA events to be set up by regional training officers in the future and grants could support these. This way, more BCA members will get access to the workshops in all regions and will get to meet BCA training committee members face to face and receive top level training.

BCA Positive Profile to Training

BCA has an opportunity here to launch training to the masses as it should be done. BCA Training Officer should be the person to head this up and coordinate these training activities. We are sitting in the wings waiting for BCA to vote in a full training officer and give training committee their full support and I urge you to do so before enthusiastic volunteers lose interest.

BCA Coaching Scheme – potential for

In DCA, there are no clashes of opinions, just shared experience. Over the last 12 months I have shared the DCA scheme with caving clubs out of our region with a view of moving this forward nationally. There has not been any negativity at all to this, only positive feedback. It is a coaching scheme for DCA covers and concentrates on training the trainers as well as club members through workshops and training courses run by club members themselves assisted and mentored by myself, a BCA trainer and assessor for all the BCA schemes of which I have over 25 years of experience.

BCA Training Officer

For years, BCA Training Officer as a title is something to be proud of. It is not just a position, it is (or should be seen as) an honour to represent cavers in the UK.

BCA training officer is and should be the ‘go to person’ to answer all of those enjoyable questions about what do we do, what do we use, how do we do this etc.. We do this in DCA and most of the DCA member caving clubs work alongside with an agreed syllabus of training. See appendix 1 which was passed around Training Committee in February 2017:

ACTIONS FOR BCA meeting Saturday January 6th 2018

- 1) - *To fully support the working of the BCA Training Committee*
- 2) - *To increase funding to the BCA Training Committee – suggested figure of up to £4,000 if we have the funds...*
- 3) - *To vote in a full training officer*
- 4) - *To support the BCA Training Committee in exploring the opportunity to create a BCA Coaching Scheme for recreational caving.*
- 5) - *To support BCA events to be set up by regional training officers in the future. CIC holders are happy to run events at the reduced rate of just £150 per day + up to £50 travel expenses and up to £50 venue hire.*
- 6) - *To support the BCA Training Committee in co-option of additional members to the training committee is an avenue which will be utilised whenever it can be.*
- 7) - *GM QMC paper. Members that will make up the BCA-QMC include ‘The Training Officer’. Do BCA feel that the TO should be notified and included as a position as set out in the infancy of QMC set up. (At present, TO is informed by TC members currently involved but inform TC on an informal basis). This may be important to BCA Training Committee in the future if Nigel Atkins or Richard Hill do not act or hold the position of BCA TO.*

Nige

Nigel Atkins

Acting BCA Training Officer

04/01/18

Appendix 1

BCA Training Officer

We need to tie this training officer business down once and for all. BCA wanted someone not involved with the professional schemes. I personally can't see any credibility in this position unless we take it seriously and move forward:

Essential qualities

- *Must be completely open to all training needs and practices undertaken around the country and not impart personal preferences – This is (or should be) a highly respected position in BCA, someone in this position with their own agenda will undermine the hard work that training committee has been doing in the past*
- *Must have interpersonal skills to the level of communicating in an open and friendly manner to all who contact them in their position – This position can seem by many covers their second point of contact with BCA (after Mary & membership)*
- *Must be able to coordinate and possibly chair BCA training committee meetings – the future success of the training committee relies on this*
- *Must be able to communicate with all fellow training committee members – this person must be able to talk, at times in depth, with regional training officers and other training committee members – on various subjects*
- *Must be able to communicate with club training officers – this person must be able to discuss items with club training officers with a clear understanding of current training needs and issues*
- *Must have a proven track record of involvement in recreational training – this position to have any weight within the recreational side of caving needs someone who has been involved at the top level of club training*
- *Must have enough time to give to this position – this position is not to be taken lightly as a 'title' of BCA Training Officer! The real work needs to be done, voluntarily, in between the meetings*
- *Must attend **ALL** training committee meetings – this position is not to be taken lightly as a 'title' of BCA Training Officer! These meeting are important as the results will be shared to hopefully every recreational caver in the UK either as an individual member or through their clubs.. and maybe even further*

Ideal qualities

- *To be a current CIC holder – without this, where is the proof of technical ability in order to share and discuss technical issues with fellow covers*
- *To be aware if not involved with the professional schemes – there are clear differences in techniques being taught at professional and club level, it is important that we know these and understand them to be able to offer advice to recreational covers*
- *To have been involved with BCA training committee in the past – proves dedication to the cause, nuff said*
- *To be a current regional training officer or have been open in the past – as above!*
- *Have a clear understanding of training and practices undertaken around the country, standards and contacts – without this, the question arises why someone wants this position?*

Nige, Nigel Atkins, DCA Training Officer, 20/02/17

DISCUSSION:

RW: NA has asked for more money to be available to Training – I am prepared to propose the budget for Training Committee needs to be increased.
NW I'm prepared to second.

NA: Just to update on a few things, it's been clear to me that there's been individuals who have done quite a bit of damage in the past, but thank goodness NA, Hill and Ball have been involved to mitigate this. I feel that post of Training officer has been tried to be watered down, BUT we are losing a lot of experience and the post of Training Officer is the first port of call. Formally the Training Officer has been excluded from QMC, which is unfortunate, as gripes and issues tend to come to the Training Officer - they don't go to QMC, and Nigel can handle them.

With regards to access for BCA trainers - CNCC have given access for BCA officer training permits. As there was an informal bridge it could be sorted out.

Things have been set up informally in place.

AE: I think you should move to action points.

1. For BCA to fully support the Training Officers and secondly, increase the funding. We are spending up to £2000 already and we don't have the money to do what we want

There isn't a coaching scheme for BCA available at the moment -just competencies. We now have had two training officers come to workshops to run DCA schemes in their areas, with good feedback.

Support DCA events = two reports of arrogance, one club did not like trainer being very prescriptive. NA felt that this was a terrible attitude to have, if someone is safe to use something, let them. There have also been commercial covers applying for grants through clubs to get work. Some of these couldn't be sanctified because of timing, which caused some ill feeling. There are grants available however.

NA is happy to go to Yorkshire and other areas to support training events and help to filter out information to other clubs. It isn't the money that's the issue with clubs, what they need is direction, help and support. We can use the 25-year anniversary with Walking In The Air for getting BCA out there.

Kev West wrote the Derbyshire scheme years ago – they are resources for people out there – one of our events is funding surveys – we would like people to get involved with this sort of thing.

Schemes should be run by themselves and we should rubber stamp them... I got called down for this as arrogance but it's about supporting the schemes. We should make a formal bridge between QMC and others.

Also, set up as QMC, Training Officer should be part of it – it has been removed, but it should be in there. NA needs to be able to bring reports from QMC rather than having it come in piecemeal – he is quite happy to bring that forward.

SN: Next QMC meeting is 25th Feb at library, see you there. NA: No, I won't I won't be there unless you vote me. SN: I don't.. I can't.... TA: can you just vote for it?

AE: Can't we just block vote unless anyone has objections?

LW: We can't vote in a Training Officer, it's not an AGM. You are the Training Officer, your appointment to role wasn't through the correct route, therefore you have not been approved by ballot, but you are the Training Officer. DC: The word "Acting" is just there until the next AGM. Are there any consequences if the officer so chooses if they don't use it?

AE: technically they should use it. RW: What's your thoughts?

NW: Well as far as outside world knows, you are Training Officer. DC: Exactly.

NW: Small concern ... proper to have linkage between QMC and training, just slightly worried about being bounced into it as we haven't actually got any QMC input on this. NA: The fact I'm not there on QMC is incorrect. NW: Just flagging up we may be making life more difficult by doing that today, whereas if we had a formal proposal from QMC it could just go straight through.

NA: I take that but can't BCA vote in?

AB: QMC is part of this council, why can't we tell them what to do with it?

NW: I had to backtrack a decision at last meeting.

AB: I can see what NA is getting at that something is different to what was expected, and I don't want to be running off in the wrong direction on that.

AE: This comes back to virtually everything is decided in the Committees not the Council.

NA: Are you confusing that QMC might have to report to the training officer? No...consensus... DC: pointed out that if NA has the original document, then Council has already approved it.

NW: Again, my reluctance is that I only saw the paperwork yesterday and I don't want to cause any more problems.

NA: All I'm trying to do is reinstate what was set up.

AB: We had a document that was set up and approved of by Council. All we need to do is make sure it is the same document here today.

NW: If that document is the same one, all we need to say is we reiterated our decision but I cannot verify that document right now.

SN: I am not a member of QMC but if you can give me a copy of that document, I can present it to QMC. Are you absolutely sure this document is an original? NA: Yes.

AB: Is there someone on QMC Council to monitor what is going on?

NW: Yes, that is happening, although I have not been able to sit on every meeting.

AB: You can see where my concern is coming from, it may just run on.

AE: Can we move this on and vote on all seven points?

NA: We still have a BCA tri ops in position that means this panel will no longer hear the gripes but they will have the backing of the Training Officer.

NW: Are you creating a situation where QMC reports to you and you then report to Council?

NA: No, just to reinstate that Training Officer is notified of meetings and can go to them So can answer on behalf of QMC, if someone else from QMC is not present in meetings.

AE: If we want to modify point seven and say “ratified by QMC meeting”, we can move on.

NA: We can remove point 3. LW: You can use the words Training Officer to describe yourself.

AB: I have a problem with the word “scheme”, I think it should be “coaching guidelines”. NA: It can be called whatever you like, as long as it works for us. AB: No problem with that.

TA: I would just like to say every time we get stuff from Training it comes at last minute and it’s very difficult when it’s the first time you’ve seen it at the meeting. NA: Maybe in future we can get this sorted out earlier – there’s just so much going on.

AE: It’s good stuff.

AE: With regards to the wording of these seven points, what do we want to do? LW: Remove it.

Point 4. Remove the word “scheme” and put in “BCA coaching guidelines”.

Point 7. To be ratified by the next QMC meeting

AE: Stephan are you happy with that? SN: As much as I have the power to, yes.

AE: With those modifications, can we accept these points.

PROPOSAL:

To accept all seven points, subject to modifications listed above.

Proposed: Badger

Seconded: JP

In Favour: All

Abstained/Against: None

Appendix 1. AE: With regards to Appendix 1, do you want to say any more? NA: No, if I’m not doing it, that’s what I’d like to bring on board. I feel the danger here is that some people think it is just recreational caving – the focus is, but there are other things that link into it and the point of contact is still with NA.

LW: The recreational grants you are administering, they are available for wider than just rope and ladder...?

NA: First Aid can go through QMC as that's a qualification – but a workshop can get a grant . It absolutely is wider than rope and ladder.

REPORT:

14. Cave Registry Working Group - Dave Cooke

Work on the Scottish Cave and Mine Registry is progressing well. It will use the same software that Matt Voysey developed for the Mendip Cave Registry & Archive. You can see a preview at <http://registry.gsg.org.uk>

David Cooke, Jan 2018

DISCUSSION:

DC: As far as I can tell, the Scottish Registry is up and running now at that .url – it has been several years without one and uses same software as Mendip registry.

REPORT:

15. IT Working Group – Dave Cooke

IT Working Party

Work continues on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which comes into force in May 2018 and will affect BCA. The membership renewal forms, just issued, have been reviewed accordingly. A new Privacy Notice will appear shortly.

The Privacy Notice is a living document and will be updated to reflect BCA's current policies and working practices. As such it would be tedious for Council to have to approve it each time it is updated. A method of working would be for Council to approve specific policies and then the Privacy Notice be updated accordingly. The Privacy Notice is open to discussion by Council if it was felt that it didn't accurately reflect approved policy and working practices.

Help and advice has been given to Wendy Williams, the new Membership Administrator, whilst she learns what is needed for her new role.

David Cooke, Jan 2018

DISCUSSION:

DC: Main focus is ensuring we are up to date on privacy notice for the incoming data protection laws - other items are being worked on. LW: Are BCA issuing guidance to our member clubs? That is something our members will be looking towards us for. DC: Easiest is to point them to our BMC website or a search on privacy notices. TA: Do you take advantage of the Sports and Rec alliances? We do pay to be a member. DC: Not getting a lot of extra information from that, not always easy to sort through all the intro courses I'm sent to find ones that are effective.

REPORT:

16. Qualifications Management Working Party

Including: Training Administrator – Mary Wilde
Report to be delivered on day of meeting.

Report for BCA Council from Special QMC meeting 6th December 2017

From Phil Baker – Acting Chair QMC

Special meeting to address the item from previous Council meeting 7th October 2017 (item 16) regarding a directive from BCA Council to re-instate assessment at Revalidation Workshops, with a view to suspending awards if standards not met. This went against over two years of discussion and input from both CIC panel and QMC which had introduced an Update/CPD model, rolled out to all award holders. This raised serious concerns from QMC members that the outcomes from various past QMC/CIC Panel meetings were not accurately presented to the last Council meeting. These concerns were subsequently represented to AE/NW via email from various QMC members and the Special QMC meeting called to look at this item.

The agenda then expanded to include some regular QMC items although this was questioned by both QMC representatives and Council Officers throughout, and a number of standard items rolled over to next scheduled QMC meeting.

Main Outcomes (see minutes from 6/12/17 for details)

- 1. After further discussion the consensus at the Special meeting was that Update/CPD model should continue, with a documented action plan on the certificate if weaknesses observed. This will include a recommendation that the award holder shouldn't practice at this level until rectified. NW supported this after considering the full picture. GM resigned at this point.*
- 2. AHOEC report – GM/NW had attended an AHOEC conference and consulted them on some proposals for LCMLA. The report was very useful, underlining the preference for Updates/CPD not revalidation. In addition they identified a barrier to entering or maintaining a LCMLA Level One award was the requirement for significant personal caving logged days between Updates. A two tier Level One was discussed and will be explored at next QMC, when all member present. The aim is to ensure the schemes retain award holders and serve the market, whilst maintaining it's robustness.*
- 3. Southern Panel ALO rep. presented a report from their last meeting. They had concerns about a CIC Update where the T/A did not appear to operate equivalent CIC standards to other T/As. This will be raised at next CIC panel meeting*
- 4. PB agreed to step in as Acting Chair of QMC until the next scheduled meeting to support the scheme and the administrator.*

5. *At next QMC meeting 26/2/17 role of the Chair will be discussed and an open and transparent process for nomination/election will be agreed*

DISCUSSION:

SN: Special meeting was held with Phil Baker acting Chair ****The above report was read out as it had not been received in time to be included prior to the meeting****

... you can get from that report the strength of the feeling.

REPORT:

17. Youth & Development Working Group - Rostam Namaghi

The last calendar year has seen big changes to youth and development with a working group set up following the AGM. Initially comprised of 5 members it has grown to 11. There's participation from CHECC and the ASCT. Given its short history, few of the projects have come to fruition however it has had a noticeable improvement in communication and as a result members have a good working appreciation of CHECC, ASCT and the BCA.

Lancaster

Thanks to some keen grassroots covers at Lancaster University, I am very happy to report that in the coming weeks they will be incorporated as an official club. The support provided from various members of the group included:

- *Writing a new constitution, risk assessments, good practice guidelines*
- *Advice on union meetings/Insurance/funding*
- *Providing kit, transport & trips (notably ULSA, Red Rose)*
- *Training and general advice (CHECC)*

It's been an eye opening experience to see a club start from scratch and we are learning what the biggest stumbling blocks are. It's not all what you would think: kit hasn't been a major issue so far - by linking with other clubs that has got over that, for now. I think there is a role for a BCA funded kit lending set up for new clubs, however there are issues with maintenance and storage.

Liverpool

Also of note I have been liaising with the guild of students over what has largely been an insurance issue: the guild were under the impression that LCLMAs are needed for student leaders and since none of the current crop of students have one, caving has been suspended as they wouldn't be insured (they are now BCA insured).

The working group has been involved in getting them to cave as part of other clubs so that they don't deskill and also have been chasing the guild for a decision on the information provided (still outstanding). CHECC is changing the way it engages with these issues so that these things are being taken on by a single person and avoid the issues of plural responsibility that we have seen so far - this issue could have been avoided had CHECC or the BCA Y&D been involved 2 years ago, instead the issue had input from a regional council. I would strongly encourage any regional council to consult us before helping to provide training documentation.

Current projects and a brief progress statement:

Creation of the caving club starter pack:

Documentation pack is being tried and tested. We need to look at what other useful things we can bundle into this and in what form the BCA might be able to help with a kit lend scheme.

Mountaineering Caving Sections:

One of our members is currently doing some research as to how best approach mountaineers but is looking to getting caving sections established in mountaineering clubs. The intention is to use the BMC insurance coverage of occasional caving to allow them to 'dip their toes'. The issue is getting through to interested parties as this has been (unsuccessfully) attempted before.

Creation and expansion of scout caving teams:

ASCT is approaching other teams that go caving in scouting and are in the long process of becoming the official body of scout caving.

Under 18s caving as part of normal caving clubs:

Information campaign coming soon to an internet near you.

The creation of Karst Hydrology/Geochemistry, and Engineering groups in the model of the CHECC Biospeleology Group:

I'm happy to report that the CHECC Biospeleology Group has been incorporated as a BCRA special interest group, which gives them access to funding and stronger links with the BCRA. It's important to note it's not CHECC only, just that it has been set up as such. We have yet to recruit people in the other disciplines above who want to set these things up.

Student development handbook:

Assisting CHECC with its writing of the handbook. This has been on a back burner due to more pressing recent issues but is largely complete.

There are a number of other projects that we are working on but have yet to see a concrete plan or proposal put forward - this should be resolved by the next meeting.

Rostam Namaghi, Youth & Development Training Officer – Jan 2018

DISCUSSION:

NW: There was a statement from John Gunn to correct the errata – there is no problem with the set up but it has not formally been agreed that they are a special interest group. DB: It was a simple miscommunication, all is well... as to the others, Lancaster set up incredibly quickly and has done very well- thanks should go to the people within Lancaster and other supporting clubs and the Leeds Uni.

AE: DB, I'd like to put a comment in there that the University once put their caving library in a skip! You need to look after the library.

LW: It's awesome to see a new caving club come out of Universities when all we've had lately was bad news. DB: We are talking with others about setting up new clubs. TA: Birmingham? DB: Not yet, we are talking with them. We are getting there, despite some Universities reluctance, and we are trying to

tackle some of their concerns.

TA: Is there a problem with regional council? DB: I don't know, wasn't involved at the time but they may have not considered the implications for University Clubs in terms of training standards. TA: Just wondered as one of the Universities with questions on this is very close to the Dales.

DB: I don't know as much about the Scout caving sections

Badger: Not a very well written statement – it looks like teams can approach other teams, but they can't. Each county that is interested in caving has their own Scout caving teams. As discussed, we are in the process of changing to a national active support unit, which is recognised by Scouts.

TA: Can I propose that Council offer every encouragement to Rostam and his group to all his doing. I am very impressed by how this has leapt on from the AGM.

NW: I think we could be happy to say we could support this with funds if a suitable proposal comes forward. RW agreed.

TA: It's not so much about the money, it's about the massive effort it takes to move on a University club. DBL: Now we can become more proactive and go to clubs that are struggling. Peter Hall: I know keeping that dialogue going when things aren't going so well is really useful.

LW: Is there any way we can promote that in the newsletter? Speak to DR? AE said he could put that in his newsletter article.

TA: On what PH was saying, Reading Uni decided to give freshers one last go and they got a good result, a network of support can make a difference, so they don't just disappear.

JP: One of the largest problem with Uni clubs is student officialdom -they seem to want to deregister the club as it doesn't win any gold medals. DB: We have to keep fighting for it.

TA: NW mentioned it before but I cannot see the point in having a Y&D officer "vacant" when we have a Dev Group operational. I can see Rostams point, when Chris Jewel stepped down he was given the mandate to do what he wanted and he was a great organiser – Helly, then Rostam, took over without really knowing what the mandate was. Rostam didn't really see what the point was- there was nothing that he wasn't already doing through CHECK, which just needed a slightly wider steer.

DB: Rostam expressed confusion over the vacant position and had resigned. Rostam was happy to be Youth and Dev Officer – it works, so call it what you will.

LW: Is Youth and Dev a non exec post? If so, it doesn't actually matter what you call it, but if you call it a working group it has to conform. Better to keep the role that he has and form a group within it.

TA: We need to get rid of 'vacant'

PROPOSAL:

That we nominate Rostam as Youth and Development Officer for the interim.

Proposed: NA

Seconded: DB

Agreed: All

Abstained/Against: None

REPORT:

18. British Caving Library Rep - Jenny Potts
Report to be delivered on day of meeting

Work at the Library continues as usual: a mixture of continuing to re-catalogue the contents held in the original BCRA Library whilst at the same time keeping up with the cataloguing of new acquisitions (including donations and bequests, such as the John Beck bequest and its hundreds of Derbyshire surveys). We also continue to deal with enquiries, some of which involve several hours of research, and welcome visitors coming to do their own research. Our work is limited by the time the Librarian and I are able to spend and we are actively searching for volunteers to help.

*Jenny Potts,
BCRA Library Co-ordinator*

DISCUSSION:

All as reported, no additional to add.

REPORT:

19. Child Protection Officer (Acting) – vacant
No report submitted, position vacant

DISCUSSION:

AE: we have all had a word on that, nothing more to say.

REPORT:

20. FSE Rep - Ged Campion

Not too much to report at this juncture. The FSE currently represents 31 countries representing around 38,000 cavers.

The last General Assembly (GAM) took place on the 17th September this year at the 11th Eurospeleo Forum in Ferriers Belgium under the auspices of the Speleologische Dagen (Caving Days). This was organised by Belgian and Dutch cavers. Around 300 cavers from many European countries participated.

The business of the GAM was presented in the last report to council (September 2017)

Just as we manage to resolve the representation of one country another country struggles to confirm its National Organization 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.

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.

The European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) has been the most active commission in 2017 (details in September report to council) of the FSE and will be represented at the French symposium 'Understanding Conservation & Geo-tourism' which will be held on 6th March in the Ardeche. The FSE will be actively supporting the International year of Caves & Karst 2021 the initiative led by the UIS.

Timetable of Eurospeleo events & General Assembly Meetings over next 3 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 hosted 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 – Jan 2018

DISCUSSION:

AE: The European Rep, Ged, had stated that their forums were interesting, with plenty upcoming.

REPORT:

21. UIS Rep - Andy Eavis

Since the last council meeting, the main matters of the UIS have been working towards securing a UNESCO Year of Caves in 2021. The idea is to increase the awareness of people to caves and to cave conservation in particular. It needs a very professional approach and senior members of the UIS Council are working towards this. I wish them the very best of luck.

There are various UIS meetings going on around the world. It's worth visiting the website <http://www.uis-speleo.org/> to see what is going on. It is kept up in a reasonably timely fashion. There will be a delegation to France this March to approach UNESCO, which is based in Paris, to try and put forward the Year of Caves project.

Otherwise, things are progressing towards the 2021 Congress which will be held in Lyon, France. The proceedings from the last Congress in Sydney, Australia, will be published shortly.

Andy Eavis, UIS Representative - January 2018

DISCUSSION:

AE: It is worth looking on that website occasionally – I mentioned this thing in the south of France in March that could be worth going to and so is Year of Caves for 2021. I am a great supporter of UIS.

DISCUSSION:

Any Other Business

TA: It's a CNCC thing really – we would like a BCA council to revisit the algorithm that decided Alvechurch was the centre of the Universe. There are a lot of cavers who could probably contribute to

BCA council but one of the issues is the distance from the North. RV pointed out they were from Devon.

JP: Just worth pointing out that the optimum point was somewhere just NE of Worcester for all the delegates. LW: It's the Hunters Lodge - a well-known fact.

TA: That may well have been the case for the members of the time, if you want to encourage more involvement from cavers from the North, one of the things that is off-putting is the 3-hour drive to attend these meetings.

DJ and Badger pointed out they drive the same distance.

NA: Northern Caves, this is the first time we've had a CNCC rep up there. Let's see what happens as we are now talking about having an event up there – if we do a workshop, it might filter things through. I'd like the involvement and we may get it, but let's wait and see.

TA: It is a barrier and I'd just like to get that noted. The AGM has gone from Forest of Dean to Peak to Mendip and it will be about five years before it goes back to the Dales; it does look like BCA migrates south. AE: I pleaded with you to find an event in Yorkshire – last one I entirely organised at Dales Bridge and I accepted one with much less effort at Forest of Dean.

TA: Why can't we just have a meeting? AE: Because we get a lot more people for the AGM if it's an event not just a meeting. TA: Then you need to fairly go around the country as otherwise you end up with all the usual council members. AE: we have new council members today. TA: but we pick up extras from areas as we move around – if you miss out the Dales you miss out bringing anyone from the Dales area into caving.

AE: We will have the next one in the north, organised by the Chairman.

Wendy: Why don't we go north/south as we have four prime places to go – this year it's coming south so natural step is it goes to Yorkshire next year anyway?

TA: What about North Wales? NA: it's a nightmare to get to North Wales. LW: We're looking at North Wales for Hidden Earth.

SH: Possibly with NAMHO combining in mid-Wales.

Badger: Just going back to that, Tim, if you have an AGM in Yorkshire for just one day, I won't be there as it's a six-hour drive.

AE: Can we minute we will look at having it in the north for next year.

SF: Can't we have a meeting in Stoke on Trent, for example? AE: We have had a number of discussions in the time I've been involved, and it's always come back to Alvechurch.

AB: It was felt it was the central venue... AE: The wording was it was equally inconvenient for all.

NW: Also, there is cost of venue – if we hired this size of room in a hotel it would be £250 a day... part of your solution could be to find a venue in the Dales with decent video conferencing. You need a proper set up at each end for this number of people.

TA: Am just trying to point out the lack of engagement is due to distance.

AE: During my period of attendance we have had a more representative attendance

AE: Can we draw the meeting to a close? All agreed.

Meeting closed: 15:29

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
NOT PRESENT AT MEETING		
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

PROPOSAL LOG: From Current Meeting

PROPOSAL:

To drop out the word that read “modified” as this made it clearer.

Proposed: AE

Seconded: RW/LW

No objections

PROPOSAL:

That the Executive is authorised to go ahead with an increase in the insurance indemnity level from its current 5mil to 10mil, if needed in an emergency Otherwise, the insurance is left at present level until the agreed renewal discussion time.

Proposed: AB

Seconded: AE

Objections: None

PROPOSAL:

I propose that we withdraw the direction to QMC that re-validations be in the form of a pass/fail assessment and instead leave QMC to bring forward a process which meets what they see as the needs of the candidates and their employers while maintaining standards which BCA can be proud to put its name to.

Proposed: NW

Seconded: SN, NA

In favour: All

Objections: None

PROPOSAL:

I propose that The Treasurer and Ac. Secretary be empowered by Council to agree a budget and resources for administrative support with the Training Committee.

Proposed: NW

Seconded: NA

DC asked to modify to ALL committees, not just Training committees. NW agreed.

In favour: One against. Remainder in favour.

RW voted against – due to money being spent which is not in the budget. Therefore, votes against.

Noted. NA agreed committee should be asked to justify the spend on it.

NW said RW’s point is entirely valid.

PROPOSAL:

To take out ‘to appoint’ and replace with ‘As required, the Executive seek the opinion of one, or more, currently practising legal professional for legal matters, as they arise’

Proposed: NW

Seconded: Badger

All in favour of proposal as amended.

None against, no abstains.

PROPOSAL:

Appoint Paul Ibberson as Scrutineer this year.

Proposed: RW/AE

Seconded: TR

In Favour: All

Against: None

PROPOSAL:

That Council supports CRoW Liaison Officer in establishing CRoW campaign group of interested covers to support the CRoW Campaign.

Proposed by: TA

Seconded: AE

All in favour: All

Against None

AB abstained CSCC

PROPOSAL:

To appoint Mark Sims as Acting E & T Officer.

Proposed: NW

Seconded LW

In Favour: All

No abstains

PROPOSAL:

That NW takes role as Insurance Manager in interim.

Proposed by: LW

Seconded: DC

In Favour: All

No abstains

PROPOSAL:

To accept all seven points, subject to modifications listed above.

Proposed: Badger

Seconded: JP

In Favour: All

Abstained/Against: None

PROPOSAL:

That we nominate Rostam as Youth and Development Officer for the interim.

Proposed: NA

Seconded: DB

Agreed: All

Abstained/Against: None

ACTION LOG & COMMENTS MADE

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 214: Covered by Rostams report

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

215: Speaks for itself.

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

216: Upload of article - NW got this yesterday from LW, not in time for this meeting, will happen between now and next meeting.

ACTION 217 (Working party & co-ordinating gathered information on CO² level risks)

From: Discussion on Bob Mehew paper re: potential risk from CO²/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.

217: CO₂ information paper, BM noted, NW said small amount of correspondence with Richard – item currently in progress.

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

219: Legal/Professional advisor enquiries will come up later in NW report.

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

220: Will come up.

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

221: Will come up in NWs report.

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 practical

222: Y&D training - will come up in Rostams report.

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

223: Policy on access issues - clear policy - TA stated item was in progress.

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

224: Media info and website, press pack creation. NW said Dave Rose happy to take that on

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

225: BCA Facebook update – done

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

226: Formal representative at QMC – comes up later, NW & AE had attended 2 QMC meetings.

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

227: Reports to be uploaded to website as received – RW: This is happening.

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

228: To be discussed later

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

229: Newsletter – DC stated ongoing.

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

230: To be discussed – later

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

231: Needs putting on website, not done yet, will come up

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

232: BCA logo & info on NewtoCaving – DC/TA stated not concluded, but in hand. AE asked if New To Caving site was running? TA confirmed it is, all up and running, approx. 100 hits a day

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

233: Done.

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

234: Y&D: Not done as yet. Mark Richardson said we need to arrange exec meeting, AE agreed.

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

235: Done.

ACTION 235a (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.

236: To be discussed during Acting Secretary Report.

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.

237 Physical assets- RW no feedback, he maintains asset registry, nobody has responded. NW said that is important is an Action for Hidden Earth – up to date list of kit needed from LW – LW said compiling an asset register – NW said need to keep on top for claims purposes. LW confirmed in hand with Dave Gough (incoming Treasurer). NW said most likely to be the source of a claim, so wants to keep on top of it – PCs and library stuff unlikely to be stolen, but a load of stuff taken from cabin would be a high amount. LW said are doing it. AE said to RW to chase Les. Les said all happening.

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

238 – NW strike out as being done.

FURTHER ACTION COMMENTS:

SF: With regards to 212 – passing data on to him – BM wrote an analysis, so no need for more, done.

DRAFT