



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Council Meeting, 12th January 2019

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Item 6: Chairman's Report – *Les Williams*

I was honoured to be invited to attend a reception at the Speakers Residence in the Houses of Parliament which recognised the achievement of the British cave divers in the Thai rescue. I was representing the British Caving Association and there were many cavers present from the BCRC and the CDG.

There were presentations from the Thai Ambassador, BCRC, CDG and from Mr Speaker himself.

As I'm sure we're all aware, the rescue was a major achievement and it's good to see the Divers getting the recognition that they all deserve in the New Year's Honours list.

We shouldn't forget the many volunteers working behind the scenes, in Thailand and back here in the UK to enable the successful outcome.

I also found myself at SUICRO which was held in County Clare. I was enthralled by another presentation on the Thai rescue, given by Jim Warny, on his part in the rescue. I was privileged to be able to award him an engraved tankard on behalf of the whole caving community, to recognise his part in the endeavour.

Whilst I was in Parliament I was reminded of two things, firstly, that BCA is constituted in a similar structure to the UK government, as a committee style organisation, and secondly, that we are generally much better behaved in our meetings than the UK Parliamentarians.

It should be remembered that all the people working within UK caving are volunteers who are giving their best, for the benefit of all cavers. We should recognise these people and thank them for their valuable time and effort.

I remind you all that BCA is constituted as a committee based organisation. The committees are where the work is/should be done and should only require approval from council as a final part of the process. I am determined to make the committee structure work so that we can keep Council meetings short and spend more time caving

Item 7: Secretary's Report – *No report post vacant*

Item 8: Acting Treasurer's Report – *Robin Weare*

Following the appointment of Howard Jones as Assistant Treasurer we agreed that he would take over the book-keeping on 1st January and concentrate until then on finding out how things work and carrying out specific projects.

We also agreed that I would continue to maintain the accounting records and prepare the accounts for 2018 and, during the immediate future, much of my available time will be taken with the 2018 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 2018 could be chased up if necessary and submitted without delay.

Regional Funding for 2017 has been agreed and paid to the three councils who submitted their claims in a timely fashion.

CNCC £480.90

CSCC £80.75

DCUC £83.45

Claims from the other councils were received during December and have not yet been agreed.

Some areas of “windfall” surplus have recently come to light. The insurance brokers have confirmed that we will be entitled to a low claim refund in respect of 2015 – 2017 as set out in the Insurance Manager’s report. We have benefitted from efficiency savings by the Membership Secretary (see below) and also from the unexpectedly low use of the administrative assistant, who has not been replaced following her resignation. Against this Council will recall authorising items of expenditure for which there had been no budgetary provision.

Secretarial & Personnel

It was decided by the Executive that I would take on the duties of BCA Secretary and Personnel Manager until those posts could be considered at the January council meeting. Despite two pre-planned holidays I have done my best to at least hold the fort and am grateful to everyone for their co-operation and understanding. The items which follow relate to matters which would normally have been dealt with by the Secretary. Others will come up during the relevant committee report.

Minutes

It may have been noticed that the minutes of the last meeting appeared on the website within a few days of the meeting itself. I am most grateful to Mary Wilde for her efforts in this regard. Not only did she produce a first draft very promptly it required very little additional input from the Executive.

Matt Ewles has kindly agreed to take the minutes of this and (hopefully) the next few meetings. I’m sure that Council members will join me when I offer him my thanks.

The eagle eyed will have noticed that I have made a start on updating the minutes of past meetings, some of which had remain on the website as “draft” for a very long time.

Website

During the few days after the last Council meeting I spent some time deleting or updating website references to individuals who no longer wished to be contact points. Whilst doing so I could not fail to note that many of the individual pages contained much that was well out of date. I mentioned this to some of the committee chairs and at least one has responded, although it remains the case that many of the committee pages would benefit from updates. I remind committees that the content of “their” pages should be reviewed and updated regularly and that it is their responsibility to do so.

Council Contact List

It was last revised in 2017 and so I have started an update process which Louise Baddeley has kindly agreed to co-ordinate.

Membership matters

During the last few weeks I have gained a unique overview of the membership renewals process. As Acting Treasurer I have known that it works and that the money comes in. Having now also seen it from the point of view of the Secretary and as the line manager of the Membership Secretary I have become even more aware of the huge contribution in time and effort from two unheralded and often unappreciated volunteers.

It is clear from the e-mails which are copied to the Secretary that David Cooke & David Gibson must have put in hundreds of hours of effort to update the system in advance of the renewals process and, whilst I have understood that recent legislation may have required more changes than usual this year, I have no doubt that they have worked nearly as hard for many years past.

That they have worked quietly and in the background, seeking no publicity for their efforts is very much to their credit but I think the time has come for their contribution to be recognised. Without them and their very professional approach BCA would have found it very much more difficult to operate.

I have also been greatly impressed by the efficiency of the current membership Secretary. That her hours in 2018 are over 40% less than the hours previously charged says it all.

There is a published guideline which says that a club which applies for membership of BCA should have at least 4 members. There are no such guidelines for clubs which renew an existing membership but Council should realise that 5 of the clubs which renewed their membership in 2018 would not have qualified for a new membership.

SUI

I have received an enquiry from the Secretary of SUI, which is the NGB for caving in Ireland but registered as a club with BCA.

He has been asked to explore the possibility of an affiliation scheme where people can pay a token fee to be connected to the SUI without being members (and therefore without the associated benefits such as insurance, cave leadership training schemes, etc).

He asks if such a scheme would be acceptable to BCA. He informs me that this has been raised in the past but I can find no record of any relevant discussion.

2019 AGM

It was decided at the last AGM that the venue would be in the north of England. We have an offer to co-host the event from Yorkshire Subterranean Society (YSS) and I have provisionally booked all 32 beds for the weekend. I have also established that both Horton & Clapham village halls would be available for the meetings. Discussions are at a very early stage, and will be continued only if Council approves the concept, but it is envisaged that YSS members will pre rig a number of local caves for use on the Saturday and be prepared to guide trips if required. I am most grateful to the YSS Chairman for his immediate and positive response to my tentative enquiry.

Item 8.1: Insurance Manager's Report – Howard Jones

Liability Renewal:

7.5% decrease in Hiscox premium due to non-cavers having lower cost of cover. Payment plan available over 10 months at zero interest. AIG Premium unaltered. Total premium 2018 was £39,219 (including IPT) 2019 will be £36,948. Individual members now covered for rambling (no longer needs to be a caving club meet ramble). Howdens recommend renewal on this basis. BCA members agreed.

Next steps:

Update FAQs: Action Howdens

Update certificates on BCA website: Action Howdens

Continue to work on child abuse policy: Action Howdens and C Boardman

Low claim rebates:

2016 rebate due value circa £2,600: Action Howdens

2017 rebate due, value circa £2,000: Action Howdens

2018 rebate will be due in 2019 assuming no claims by 31/12/18, value £1,400

Expedition policy:

Howdens confident the PJ Hayman policy would respond in the event of a foreign cave expedition claim. AE and HJJ to meet with Peter Hayman January 2019 to get comfort. If they do so both BCA and/or GPF would be involved in marketing and approving expeditions for cover. (PJH runs BMC policy).

Other policies: (3 small non liability polices renewed October)

Move to Howden once BCRA library cover quote received from existing brokers. Action HJJ

Howden activity levels:

Since 1/9/18 Howdens and I have responded to 15 different types of enquiry.

AOB:

Risk assessments: NW and RD to work together to produce an online system similar to LTA

Howdens have confirmed there is no need for members to have a membership card for insurance reasons.

Item 8.2: Membership Administrator's Report – Wendy Williams

Membership Figures as at 31.12.18

DIMs – 725

Groups – 176

CIMs – 5382

Renewals have been coming in thick and fast and I will produce an up to date figure at the Council Meeting

Lancaster University Caving Club

Lancaster University Caving Club were accepted at the AGM Council Meeting and the relevant forms were sent to them. They did not reply and have not paid anything for their Club or their Members for 2018. At the time of writing (3 Jan) I have not received their Forms or Payment for 2019

Item 8.3 Training & QMC Terms of Reference – Alan Butcher

We had a productive meeting back in November and a draft Terms of Reference were circulated for both Training Committee and QMC.

A couple of suggestions/clarifications have been raised and, as a result, we are planning another meeting toward the end of February with a view to completing things.

Nigel has mentioned the Training Officers duties in his report, these need to be agreed and included within the final documents to be presented to the April council meeting and subsequent AGM along with operational protocols, etc for both Training Committee and QMC. We will be doing that at our meeting in February. I am happy to hold a further meeting if required to ensure that everything is agreed before the April meeting.

Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report – Andrew Hinde

There is nothing to report. All work has been undertaken within the CRoW Working Group.

Item 10: Youth & Development Officer's Report – Rostam Namaghi

Summary of actions taken since October:

- Legal question regarding Charterhouse drafted and awaiting results, Robin has actioned this and the questions were redrafted. Hopefully further advice will not be needed as I was under the impression that there had already been an agreement in place between the previous secretary, Charterhouse CC and Youth and Development.
- Discussions with Trinity St David University in Swansea have been very successful and we will be ordering kit for them soon (this has been budgeted for). We have to wait for term to restart to continue.
- Constitution written for Birmingham Students Caving Club: ongoing discussions as to the viability of this project. Once they establish as a BCA member club with a definite intake, we will consider what the best form of support we can give.
- Volunteers sourced for Publications and Information Standing Committee.
- BCA Website updated to reflect our existence.

Next Quarter actions

- Produce written materials (and put them through BCA publishing) and film videos regarding the various Youth and Development Projects. The Q&As regarding the safeguarding issue have been written.
- Begin the Meet the Members campaign (where the Y&D team go out to clubs and help with making them better for young people and students, and learn about good practice within member clubs). This has been repeatedly delayed due to the Charterhouse debacle.
- Continue support for a revival of student clubs at Swansea and Birmingham
- Help structure Lancaster's repayment plan (to be done through their union's safety budget)
- Holding the annual meeting of the Youth and Development group as per requirement of a standing committee (9th of February at the TSG)

Item 11: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report – *Mark Sims*

Since the last council meeting, Andrew Atkinson has run a training session on anchor placement at the annual CHECC forum, including an overview of the work the E&T group do on anchor placement.

Simon Wilson is currently investigating loose anchors reported in the Dales, and is drafting a report on his findings. Additionally, an alternative resin (Fischer FIS EM Plus 390) has been purchased and tested with promising initial results for currently approved anchors, and further tests are underway using Climbing Technology anchors. All tests of new products are with a view to maximising the performance of anchors placed under the scheme, and trying to minimise the chance of potential supply issues causing problems for the scheme in future.

Tests of lifelining kit with members of the training committee are also due to be carried out in the next few days.

Additional projects mentioned in the report to the last council meeting remain ongoing.

Item 11.1 Rope Test Officer's Report – *Bob Mehew*

Nigel Atkins of Training Committee contacted me to enquire about doing some tests on two types of life lining kit. The apparent problem is that neither kit has been tested to the European Norm (EN) standard for kit used to belay people. I have gathered a few people together who have done similar work on related kit and we have come up with a proposal for some preliminary work. We intend to undertake this work on 8 January using the Bradford Pothole Club drop test rig. If the preliminary work proves encouraging, we will be seeking funding for further work using new kit and new rope which could well exceed £500.

No rope testing work has been undertaken.

Item 12: Training Officer's Report – *Nigel Atkins*

BCA Training Officers Role

The BCA Training Officers terms of reference and duties needs to be clarified and a meeting is being set up to discuss this. The existing one has been sent to previous council meetings and presented at the June AGM 2018 is included. (Appendix 1)

BCA Training Officers Role on the QMC

I have attended all of the QMC meetings this year and have confirmed to their convenor and the members that I will support them and take on any duties that they wish me to do. At the moment some of the TO duties have been taken over due to the misunderstandings etc. I am happy to continue with duties as laid down in the terms of reference 2017 and I am happy to discuss this with QMC at a meeting that is currently being set up by Butch.

BCA Training Committee

This is looking very healthy and we have no problems to report at all. The membership is strong and we have a team of very experienced and dedicated volunteers.

BCA Training Techniques

On Tuesday January 8th 2019 members of BCA Equipment and Training Committee will look at training techniques that we currently use in BCA. The BCA Equipment officer and I will report

back to training committee and the QMC our findings to come up with agreed best practice in BCA.

Access for BCA Trainers and assessors

As BCA Training Officer I have applied for cave permits for use in the CIC scheme and I have now obtained them for LC/MNLA training and assessment too. All good.

BCA Training Grants

We ran 8 national workshops set up across the country in 2018. Training committee is now concentrating on BCA training events to be set up by regional training officers with grants to support these. This way, more BCA members get access to the workshops in all regions and will help promote the good work that BCA does in training.

BCA Coaching Guidelines

The DCA scheme has changed to just 4 club level training modules progressing to the coach training modules. This coaching scheme for cavers concentrates on training the trainers as well as club members through workshops and training courses run by club members themselves assisted and mentored by a training committee member who is also a BCA trainer and assessor.

Appendix 1

BCA Training Officer - Terms of Reference

BCA Training Officers Duties 2017:

The post is a voluntary position and is filled by election every three years. The Training Officer sits on BCA Council, the QMC and reports the work of the Training Committee to Council. Normally LCMLA and CIC candidates have little reason to contact the Training Officer other than to lodge an appeal.

To deal with applications for exemptions from formal assessment, to arbitrate and make decisions regarding reassessments, technical and procedural queries and to resolve disputes relating to individual candidates.

To oversee the disciplinary process but play no part in the investigation stage.

The Training Officer is responsible for ensuring the training schemes are maintained and generally promote the development of training in all areas of caving in the BCA.

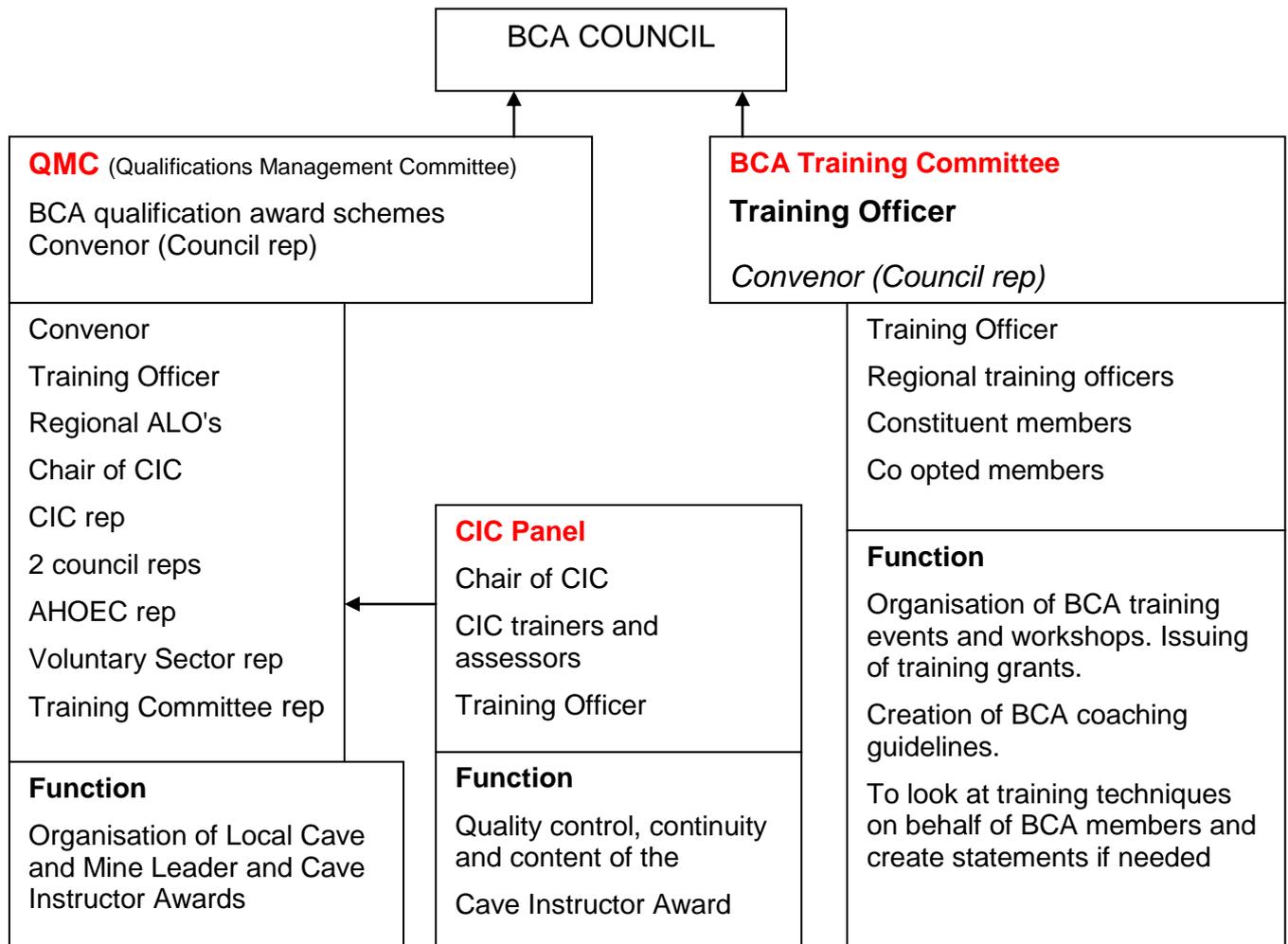
The training officer is the contact for all training activities of the BCA. For any enquiries relating to specific topics, the BCA training officer will direct these to the appropriate contacts.

To authorise all award certificates and sign all Cave Instructor Certificates before they are issued.

To operate as Line Manager for the Training Administrator

To liaise and build relationships with the recreational side of caver training and support the work of the BCA training committee

NOTE: I suggest the Training Officer works closely with BCA Executive and the Convenor of QMC to agree together what changes/duties need to be made/added.



Item 13: Publication & Information Officer's Report – Jane Allen

I am still finding my feet within my new role and would like to thank Les Williams for his help and advice.

THE PROMOTION OF BCA

As stated in my previous report:

'I believe the BCA needs to better promote itself as an organisation to the wider caving community. Ensure cavers know what it actually does and why BCA is relevant to them'.

Also:

'The BCA therefore needs (amongst other means of communication) a strong presence online, which includes a modern website and active social media pages'.

Hence....

BCA ADVERT & SOCIAL MEDIA

Many thanks to Gary Douthwaite for helping design the new BCA advert for use in Descent and elsewhere. This advert promotes many (though not all, space was limited) of the positive things BCA does. An improvement on the previous adverts, half of which were about disease. The advert will be updated and improved upon over time.



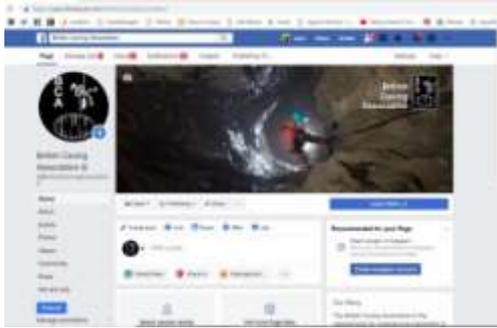
- The BCA advert has been pinned to the top of the BCA facebook page and shared round various facebook caving groups – CHECC, Cavers of Facebook etc.
- The above post has also been ‘boosted’ at a cost of £20 as I wanted to see the reach/engagement. Full results to be shown at meeting – briefly ‘total reach’ 6700+ of which 3300 paid for. 522 ‘engagement’ of which 135 paid for, with £2 of budget to go.
- The advert was posted onto the ukcaving facebook page and reached 1,100+ people with an engagement of 73. There was no cost to BCA for this
- I am in the process of adding a modified version of the advert to the forum itself – for free - and a post has been ‘stickied’ to the top of the BCA board on UKC:
<https://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?topic=24531.0>
- The advert has been tweeted on the UKC twitter feed and posted on Instagram. I have help running the latter and am yet to look into a BCA Instagram account. Once I’m up to speed with UKC, BCA will be next. Thank you to those who have offered to help me with this.

For minimal cost a positive message about BCA has been spread widely on social media. The advert in the next edition of Descent will cost £500. Looking at it purely from a cost effectiveness point of view, the expenditure of £3000 a year on BCA advertising in Descent is poor value for money. BCA is reaching (I believe) an older demographic of caver with the Descent adverts – I base this on the CHECC questionnaire where not a single respondent mentioned Descent. Although I am not suggesting, BCA advertise itself as an association in the Duke of Edinburgh magazine, I have experience advertising in this publication and know a quarter page advert, which reaches 30,000 people, would cost £350 before any negotiated discount. I do not wish to give Descent’s readership here, however it is below 30,000. My point is, BCA could reach many more cavers (especially younger ones) with adverts and other positive messages on social media for £3,000 than it does via Descent and it could promote caving to a wider audience (ie DofE) more cost effectively.

I am given to understand, BCA advertising in Descent is as much financial support of the magazine as it is to promote BCA itself. I have no problem with this, Descent is the last of its kind in the UK and has certainly been a part of my caving life for over 30 years. However, if BCA is to support Descent to the tune of £3000 annually, should BCA not be upfront and proud about this with its members? For too long, many cavers see BCA as just a ‘provider of insurance’ etc, the message in the new advert is a start in addressing this and BCA’s generous support of Descent would be another positive message from BCA.

FACEBOOK

- Over the past weeks I have been posting onto the BCA facebook page (as has Cookie). The number of 'likes' is now over 930 and rising.
- A button, linking the facebook page to the website has been added where it says 'learn more' below.



- If other BCA groups 'tag' BCA in their facebook posts, I will see them and know to share. It's too time consuming looking at lots of groups every day. Use @BritishCavingAssociation also use @ukcaving and I will share on there too.

Logo

Logo design is coming on well. Queens University Caving Club came up with an excellent idea for their entry into the UKC CHECC Grand Prize and a thread on the forum has also been fruitful:

<https://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?topic=24341.0>



The Website

Please don't shoot the messenger. My comments in my last report regarding the BCA website were made following numerous comments to me about the website. Judging by the feedback given since the last meeting it appears the website could indeed do with updating.

An example of how a new website might look will be shown at the meeting.

How this is pursued further will be discussed at the planned P&I committee meeting in early Spring.

The BCA Newsletter.

I intend to conduct a social media campaign when the next newsletter is published to a) promote the latest edition and b) encourage people to sign up to receive it. This campaign will include boosting on facebook.

BCA Publications, Advice Notices and Information

Some of the notices listed on the current BCA website are outdated – I propose I go through them and suggest what could be removed/archived/updated. (Said this in my last report, apologies not had time to complete yet)

P&I Standing Committee

From my last report:

The P&I is a standing Committee though as I understand it hasn't met for a considerable time? Who would like to be a part of this committee as I would like to establish a group to help with the above work?

David Rose has kindly agreed to join the committee, as have Will Burn, Lydia Leather & Corin Donne from Youth & Development. Anyone else? I plan a meeting in early Spring.

CHECC Questionnaire conclusions

Tim has written a detailed report on the results of the questionnaire. My main observations are the importance of fellow cavers and clubs to the respondents and the work BCA still has to do promoting itself as an organisation to CHECC members.

THE PROMOTION OF CAVING

In my last report I stated:

In order to encourage more people to caving, the BCA should improve its promotion of our sport to a wider audience, not just within the caving community itself – we know caving's great.

As BCA has already adopted www.newtocaving.com, it makes sense to promote NTC, thereby promoting caving itself. I realise some have an issue with NTC not 'belonging' to BCA, however until someone designs a website to replace NTC I suggest BCA get behind New to Caving.

A leaflet for beginners – an excellent way for BCA to reach out to potential new cavers

From my last report:

Design is well under way and I hope to have a mock up to show you at the meeting.

Caving on BBC Breakfast & on the BBC Get Inspired website

Please refer to this link on Mike Bushell of BBC Breakfast going caving:

<https://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?topic=24274.0>

The above prompted me to contact BBC Get Inspired, trying to get Caving listed here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/get-inspired/25416779>

My e-mails, tweets and phonecalls were ignored (how rude, BBC), so I wrote to my MP and he wrote to the Director General! However, due to 'resources and editorial focus' they said caving wouldn't be listed with an activity guide – pff, if shinty and luge are listed, surely caving should be?? I won't give up, my MP is coming to Ingleton in February – I'm planning to go see him.

The BBC Get Inspired Team did do this though: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/get-inspired/33148059>

Kendal Mountain Festival

The Underground Session at Kendal was well attended and New to Caving prominent on the screen during the interval. <https://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?topic=24310.0>

Preliminary discussions have taken place re BCA sponsoring the event next year.

CNCC Sign at Bull Pot Farm.

The new sign at Bull Pot Farm features the New to Caving website:



The Peak District National Park website

It was pointed out (on UKC) that the links on this website needed updating. I contacted the web manager and was able to do so. Unfortunately, it is not at all easy to follow the advice:

'For further information visit www.british-caving.org.uk and follow the link "New to Caving?" Here you can download British Caving Association's two leaflets: "Try Caving" and "So, You Want to Go Caving." '

I cannot find the link to New to Caving on the BCA website – surely, it should be prominent not hidden away?

<https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/getactive/caving>

Publications update

The CHECC guidelines have been approved and are on the BCA website.

Finalising the Local Cave & Mine Leader Level One Ropework document is underway – sorry for the delay Gethin.

13.1 Webmaster's Report – David Cooke

P&I Website Proposals. After the last meeting I asked for Council members thoughts on the website via email. There was a good response. Thank you to those who did. The next step is to discuss them at a P&I meeting. No such meeting has been held. Not much progress can be made until it is.

Image Editor. My thanks to Stuart France who has volunteered to help source images for the website.

13.2 Newsletter Editor's Report – David Rose

The last newsletter was published after the October council meeting. I intend to get the next one out in mid-January.

PLEASE send me some articles!!! If you want to have a newsletter, you need to pull your fingers out. The last bumper edition took a lot of work. I can't afford the time to write or re-write all of it, as I did the last one. So if you don't send me anything, it will be short and boring. My email is david@davidroseuk.com NB I intend to include photos when possible, so send some of those too.

As previously discussed, we urgently need to find a way to increase the sign-up rate via email.

13.3 Media Liaison Officer's Report – Andy Eavis

The main item of media interest is still in relation to the Thai cave rescue. Maggie Wong of CNN Travel contacted, and I passed her to Roo Walters. Gareth May a Freelance Journalist was passed onto Jane Allen. Booker George Film Company was passed on to Emma Porter. Sky News wanted an interview which I passed to Bill Whitehouse of British Cave Rescue Council.

A documentary film company called Parable Works wants to take Ant Middleton caving. I've passed on a number of potential venues and am waiting to hear back in the fullness of time.

It is notable that several of these made initial contact by telephone. If people want a quick response, as in the case of Sky News, and other TV news channels, their preferred means of contact is always telephone, I'm not sure this was fully understood at the last council meeting.

Item 14: Qualifications Management Report – presented by Stefan Natynczuk

With the resignation of Phil Baker as chair of QMC towards the end of 2018, I am pleased to take on this role. My thanks go to Phil for his diligence and efficiency during his tenure. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Stephan Natynczuk for representing QMC as convenor to BCA council. Due to prior work commitments, I am unable to make today's meeting and so am grateful to Stephan for delivering this report.

Hopefully we will soon have finalized recruitment of a deputy chair – there have been two applications for this post.

- My first duty is to report, with great sadness, that Nigel Ball will no longer play a part in BCA training, due to ill health. It would seem apt at this point to pay tribute to him:

Nigel has been a passionate caver since his teens. This love of the subterranean environment and his ability as a teacher led him into early involvement with NCA training; initially as a 'Cave Leader' but later converting this to a 'Cave Instructor Certificate' as the NCA extended its caving qualifications.

With the founding of BCA, he continued to develop professional caving and was actively involved with the development of the CIC syllabus and for many years was chair of the CIC panel. He only relinquished this post to become BCA's training officer, a position which he held for several years.

With ever increasing knowledge and experience, caving both in the UK and internationally, Nigel has shared his passion, experience, geological and technical knowledge, as well as his enthusiasm and skill as a cave photographer, with many hundreds of cavers who have made his acquaintance. He has also acted as technical advisor to caving clubs, voluntary groups (such as the scouts), outdoor centres, military groups and county councils. He leaves a huge gap in caver training and will be sorely missed.

- Over the latter part of 2018, confusion arose around the differing functions of QMC and Training Committee. Thus a working group which comprised of Butch, Nigel Atkins, Stephan Natynczuk, and Gethin Thomas set about clarification, developing terms of reference for each. My hope is that we can now move forward, with each group being supportive of the other as they deliver their individual roles.
- Work has been ongoing in the search for a data management system to support the overall management of the BCA award schemes. 'GO', the system which has been adopted by each of the regional canoe NGBs, currently seems to be the most suitable for our purposes. My thanks go to the small team of individuals who have dedicated endless hours into pursuing this.

- QMC continue to liaise with the various CIC holders who have offered to write resources to accompany our award schemes. These resources will eventually be available on the website.
- A re-write of the schemes is very much needed as there have been many changes since the last edition of the LCMLA scheme was produced. We continue to explore avenues in which this might be facilitated.
- Finally, I would like to record my thanks to the training administrator, Mary Wilde, who makes such an enormous contribution to the running of our schemes.

Juliet Parker-Smith – Chair of QMC

Item 15: CRoW Working Group Report – David Rose

With Brexit sucking out all the political oxygen from the national conversation over the past few months, there has been little chance to make much impact with MPs and peers. At this point there seems to be no end to this in sight, but we soldier on. As I indicated at the October BCA council, in my view we need to focus on politicians at this stage of the campaign, although it is currently uphill work.

On 10 October I attended a meeting as BCA CROW group convenor with Julian Glover at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Julian, who is the chief editorial writer at the London Evening Standard, has a weekend house in the Peak District National Park and is conducting a review of National Parks and policy towards them.

He is an outdoors lover and accepted my invitation to go caving when the weather warms up. I made the CROW access case strongly and followed up with personal emails, in which I enclosed previous BCA submissions by Tim Allen and my sister Dinah Rose QC's legal opinion.

Later, Bob Mehew, a member of the working group, kindly drafted a formal written response for the Glover review. Other group members made contributions, I edited them together and submitted the response in early December, well before the deadline. I am hopeful that the BCA policy will be reflected in the eventual Glover report. He certainly seemed to get our argument that the current Defra position (CROW access only as far as the daylight ends) is perverse, and does not reflect the will of Parliament when it was debating the Act. I have urged him to get Defra to revisit the old legal advice on which its policy, and that of Natural England, is based, in light of Dinah's opinion.

In November, working group members Stuart France (of the CCC) and Tim Allen (former BCA CROW liaison officer and CNCC access officer) had an excellent meeting at the British Mountaineering Council HQ in Manchester, with their access officer Cath Flitcroft.

She was very sympathetic and agreed to organise a meeting in early 2019 on the subject of CROW access for cavers with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Mountaineering, of which she is secretary. When this happens, we will make a presentation and, I hope, a strong impression on MPs and peers.

Tim took notes at the BMC meeting and adds the following:

The overall impression was that we should be patient as there is little opportunity for immediate change especially with the government so focused on Brexit. It is possible that an 'event' might lead to a case law being set which would then help if it was favourable. The main advice is that British caving needs to get its voice heard more widely. To that end the BMC were very helpful in pointing out areas where this can be achieved.

In general we should pursue signing up to joint briefings where possible. It may be possible to join a proposed forum with other associations. We'll wait to see if BMC follow up on this.

Labour manifesto - this is being developed and is seen as the best hope for progress on improving access to the countryside. A meeting between Andrew Denton of OIA and Tom Watson was mentioned. I didn't pick up how we could influence this other than through the APPG/general lobbying in which we are under resourced.

Agricultural Bill - is on route through parliament at report stage. 'Public access for public good' does suggest payments may be tied to access. The bill is unlikely to be very specific on access but worth keeping a close watch on. BMC are submitting a briefing if I understood correctly.

Wales - I didn't take any notes on Welsh matters. I think the Outdoor Alliance for Wales, cross party groups were mentioned to take an outdoor agenda forward. Stuart will be able to brief better.

It was suggested that we speak with British Canoeing. I had met with them several years ago and secured their support for our CroW campaign.

Also I should try to re-establish contact with the S&RA who have not been as active on access as they were but may be useful for other matters.

Item 16: Vision Working Group Report – *Hellie Adams*

The setting up of BCA vision group has made head roads. We are planning to have our first meeting at the end of February / beginning of March. It has not been as smooth as I would have liked but a new vision means not taking past issues forward, but starting afresh.

The group's current members are

- Hellie Adams
- Andy Eavis
- Matt Ewles
- Rostam Namaghi
- David Botcherby
- Will Burn
- Chris Jewell
- Jo White
- Andrew McLeod
- Linda Wilson
- Richard Halliwell

I think that a few more people would strengthen the group but I hope to add people as different skills are needed. Any suggestions are most welcome.

I had a total of 4 responses about sub committee and personal roles... hopefully the attached questionnaire will get more. The vision working group has two things to look at a vision and constitutional changes.

Stage one is opening up to new ideas which I hope this questionnaire will be part of. We intend to circulate it using the BCA newsletter, UK Caving, Darkness Below, Facebook and if Cookie would help on our own website?

The CHECC questionnaire which Tim and Jane did is interesting although the average age of 23 made me wonder how many non-students filled in questionnaires! Definitely a question to be added if it is repeated. Important to note again that, as with Hidden Earth, people seemed to not understand what BCA does. Hopefully the new advert in Descent will change that.

NAMHO sent me my questions back and I have to say I learnt quite a bit! Maybe some articles about the different parts of BCA might inform people better. Web services is also something I never knew BCA did so much of. This might inspire people to want to be involved. New blood is a key part of change and also sharing the load?

The Darkness Below article too has got people talking about BCA and interesting to see people outside of caving's input.

It has been suggested that I include a vision statement sample in this report, or some example vision statements. I feel it easy to write a vision statement, but getting people to buy into it is important so at this stage it feel it is not the right time, until we really have a sense of what people see BCAs vision as.

Hopefully there will be more to report by the next meeting.

Questionnaire

We thank you for taking time to help the BCA with your insight towards a new vision. This is about us opening up ideas. All ideas are welcome no idea is stupid because inspiration can be found from the most unusual places!

1 Are you a BCA member?

Yes No Unsure

2. How long have you been caving?

<1 year 1-3 years 3-5 years 5-10 years 10-20 years 20+ years

3. Gender

M F Rather not say

4. Age

Under 18 18-25 25-30 32-50 41-50 52-60 61 or over

5. How do you find out about caving (do now or would prefer in the future as well)

Circle all that apply:

- Descent
- ukcaving
- Darkness Below
- BCA newsletter
- club newsletter
- Facebook
- BCA website
- twitter
- Instagram
- Other (please specify)

6. Would do you think BCA could be doing to help cavers?

7. What do you see BCA's role as?

8. One thing you think that would make BCA more relevant to you?

9. Do you feel BCA currently meets you needs?

Yes No Unsure

10. Anything else you think should be included in BCA's new vision?

Item 17: Cave Registry Working Group Report – David Cooke

The Devon Cave Registry is now online at <https://dcuc.org.uk/registry>. It is the fourth registry to use the same software that Matt Voysey developed for the Mendip Cave Registry & Archive. With the addition of the Devon registry the all the major caving regions now have registries although the coverage of Yorkshire is to be completed. The rest are:

- Mendip Cave Registry <http://www.mcra.org.uk/registry>
- Cambrian Cave Registry <http://www.cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk/registry>
- Derbyshire Cave Registry <http://thedca.org.uk/dca-cr/registry>
- Scottish Cave Registry <http://registry.gsg.org.uk>
- Northern Caves (Three Counties System and the North-West) <https://northerncaves.co.uk/caves/>

Item 18: IT Working Group Report

Membership Renewal. Quite a bit of time has been taken up this quarter working on the 2019 membership renewal process. The procedures, software and forms have been updated to implement the new under 18 membership rate and further updated for GDPR.

Training Admin Software. Work on evaluating GoMembership from a technical point of view is nearly complete including issues such as support levels, ability to customise, access to our data in the event of a disaster, integration with our existing system, etc, etc. No insurmountable issues have been uncovered. I've relied on Gethin Thomas and Mary Wilde to establish that GoMembership will do the required day to day activities of training administration since they are the experts here. They report that whilst GoMembership isn't perfect it is workable. This is important since the cost of modifying GoMembership, like any software, is exorbitant.

GDPR. GDPR compliance should be seen as an on-going process that will need periodically reviewing. As such I think the responsibility for GDPR should be passed to a group comprising representatives from the Executive, Membership, Training and ITWP.

Online Ballot. (This section is a repeat from the last meeting since there wasn't time to discussed it) Will has done a good job with his report but there are some key decisions that need to be made that I don't think are covered sufficiently.

- Are we insisting on electronic voting only and ditching postal votes? If not how will the postal and electronic ballot be integrated? There big cost implications for a postal ballot which will need quantifying.
- The preamble to the AGM motion suggest the votes would take place before the AGM. Will's paper suggests votes will happen after but not during the AGM although it could also be read as during and ratified after. If the later I can't see how that is different from the current system.
- Does this scheme apply to the election of officers as well as motions?

In the short to medium term I think it is best to outsource any ballot. This was the preferred option last time but was prevented by a failure to notify our members of this possible use of their date under the terms of the GDPR. This impediment has now been removed. Furthermore GDPR is not an impediment to using American companies so long as they are signed up to the EU-US Privacy Shield. In my review some of the best offerings were American. In the longer term I think we should develop our own solution to reduce the cost.

The BCA Online database of members is perfectly good enough to use for a ballot. Reports are regularly run to spot duplicates, multiple memberships, name changes, etc, etc. The Membership

Administrator spends a fair bit of time chasing these up. DIM postal addresses are checked for validity. We rely on the clubs for accurate CIM postal addresses. All members who supply an email address can check their detail with BCA Online at any time.

Item 18.1 Web Services Report – David Cooke

BCA Web Services provides web hosting for BCA members with all the features that they need at a competitive price. See <http://british-caving.org.uk/webservices> Currently there are 60 websites hosted. The BCA funds and supports 16 of those websites including the Regional Councils, BCRA, BCRA's Special Interest Groups, Cave Registry Data Archive, Caving Library and some of the cave rescue organisations.

Item 19: Safeguarding Officer's Report – Chris Boardman

I've completed an initial online training course with NSPCC and in March I will be attending a two-day Safeguarding Officer's course, also run by the NSPCC.

I recall that a council member mentioned that some of the wording in the proposed safeguarding policy wasn't quite right – I'll ask him on Saturday to remind me what the specifics are. Once that's done perhaps we need to publicise the proposed policy so that the organisations represented on BCA, such as the Scouts, can comment. Then presumably the policy would appear on the agenda for the AGM to consider adopting.

I am keen to do some publicity about safeguarding, which perhaps should follow the AGM. This would be to draw cavers' attention to the practical advice in the policy, to offer some reassurance and of course to invite comment.

Item 20: British Caving Library Report – Jenny Potts

Thanks to a working party from Orpheus C.C. moving map chests and contents plus boxes of surveys upstairs, the new Survey Room is now up and running, giving us space to work on surveys and store them separately, plus giving more room downstairs in the main Library room. We are grateful for the increased funding from BCA which has enabled us to take this step. It has allowed us to accommodate the first training course hosted by the Library: a Cave Surveying Group Intermediate Therion Training Course for 10 people in early November 2018. We hope that the Library can become a regular host to similar small training courses.

Our Library Website, www.caving-library.org.uk, continues to be upgraded and improved by small a group of dedicated caver volunteers.

We had fewer enquiries in 2018 than in 2017, down by about 10%, but a number of research requests were time consuming and interesting. We have been promised reports as a result of several enquiry requests and our help has been acknowledged in an expedition report. The number of visitors has risen by about 25% in 2018 compared to 2017; the rise reflects the increase in use by researchers, volunteers and meetings.

We have been able to attract more volunteers to help with our work and our team now includes some local club cavers and students as well as foreign cavers. It helps that a good deal of the work can be done "off site" and the finished catalogue entries emailed to us and the batch of publications returned later.

We now have 1,106 followers on Facebook – up from 1,045! We have increased our presence on UK Caving and are picking up enquiries from that forum. In some cases this has been proactive - that is responding to posts that were not explicitly directed to the caving library. We had a stand at Hidden Earth 2018 and successfully recycled a large number of duplicate publications via our Lucky Dip, receiving donations of cash and new publications in return. We continue to try to increase the profile of the British Caving Library and this November I gave a short presentation on the Library to the CHECC event in Derbyshire, attracting more potential volunteers.

Item 21: UIS Representative's Report – *Andy Eavis*

Not much has been happening on the UIS scene for the last few months. Other things that I have been involved with was an Explorers Club meeting in New York where a day entitled “Tales of dark places”, featured a lot of American cave exploration and cave science with such speakers as Bill Stone, Bill Steel, Penny Boston, Kevin Downey etc. A very good event.

The main things that are being worked on by the bureau of the UIS at the moment are the International Congress in France for August 2021.

The next bureau meeting during a speleology meeting in the Philippines 7-14th September 2019.

“A year of caves and karst” is also being progressed for 2021 to coincide with the international congress in Lyon France. If UNESCO don't play ball UIS will go ahead anyway with their own year promoted by individual countries.

The Secretary General of the UIS Fadi Nader, a Lebanese gentleman based in Paris has just had twin boys, so that is affecting his performance, many congratulations should be passed onto Fadi.

Please look on the website <http://www.uis-speleo.org/> for further dates, there are many speleological meetings taking place around the world.

Item 22: FSE Report - *Ged Champion*

Not much to report this time. Some information is repeated from October's report.

FSE Membership

The FSE comprised a membership of 31 countries in June 2017. Georgia & Armenia have recently joined. Last year Turkey withdrew due to political turmoil. and Albania dropped out due to non- payment.

Information & Publicity.

The FSE Facebook page, updated regularly by Henk Goutier (Netherlands), is continuously visited by thousands of cavers and non-cavers thus representing an excellent outreach for European speleology. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/eurospeleo>. Also, with the help of our partners of the WikiCaves organisation keep the FSE website updated on a regular basis. The FSE newsletter has been well received thanks to the hard work of Michael Laummans. The FSE has also published a Privacy Policy which was adopted unanimously by the GAM.

Last General Assembly Meeting of the FSE(GAM) 2018

The GAM for this year was held on 25th August. The Speleological Society of Ebensee together with the Austrian Speleological Association and their partners hosted the GAM in Salzkammergut, Upper Austria. This was the 12th Eurospeleo Forum organised in Europe. The meeting was attended by 20 countries which represents a good turnout. Full details of the meeting and decisions can be found in the GAM minutes on the FSE web site.

Eurospeleo Projects

Considerable work is invested in maintaining the system of sponsoring European projects, such as the EuroSpeleo Projects (ESP), the EuroSpeleo Forums (ESF), as well as the EuroSpeleo Protection Label (ESPL). Sacid-Korda's from Barcelona are now the FSE's rope sponsor. Also, Aventure Verticale (AV) have reduced their contract which has resulted in substantial changes to FSE guidelines and the applications for ESPs, ESFs and the ESPLs. The new guidelines can be found on the FSE website.

Work continues to encourage more applications from the UK.

Timetable of Eurospeleo events & General Assembly Meetings over next 3 years that involve the FSE.

ES Forum 2019 will be in Dryanovo, Bulgaria, 26-29th September. (unfortunately, this will clash with Hidden Earth. I've spoken to both parties, but neither will budge!

ES Forum 2020 will be in Burgos, Northern Spain, August.

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

Other Matters & Reports

Item 24: Online Voting for BCA members – Will Burn

At the 2018 BCA AGM online voting for BCA members was discussed, and I volunteered to investigate this. I have obtained two quotes, which give a general idea of costs and also of the process of voting. There are a few issues which would need to be "ironed out" in terms of the constitution but also in terms of how a voted-for AGM would work.

From a first pass, it appears that to institute electronic voting within the BCA would be neither costly nor particularly onerous, although it would require investment, either of time, or money, or both. It would need several changes to the constitution; not really to its spirit but to its letter. This essentially involves removing sections that refer to voters being in person. I will not delve into constitutional minutiae here as it can be addressed by those with a keener eye when the time comes.

The effort might well be worth it, however, for the increase in participation. If 0.5% of the wider BCA membership engaged in online voting, this would effectively double the participation in BCA AGMs! (Numbers approximate, but you get the idea).

How it might work

I would propose a system where:

1. Motions and agenda are proposed before an AGM and circulated as widely as possible
2. If sufficiently keen, members might email/write/telephone input to the relevant proposer before the AGM
3. Discussed and amended at the actual AGM itself
4. Voted on afterwards online – after members have had the opportunity to read the minutes and possibly (In a futuristic vision of the BCA here) watch a recording of the AGM itself (maybe it could be live!).
5. Results are announced

Problems

In an email thread, there was discussion regarding people who may not be able to access electronic voting. An ONS report* found that 9 out of 10 houses now have internet access (although this is 6 out of 10 for single over 65s), which leaves the majority of BCA members probably able to access the internet, and for the rest, postal voting, or turning up at the AGM and voting at the end, should still be available (this is also a service offered by the companies quoted from below, should volunteers be deemed unwilling/unsuitable).

Another issue is availability and accuracy of members details, specifically email addresses. If members or club secretaries do not want to provide email addresses then postal voting or turning up in person to the AGM and voting at the end should still be available. Additionally, there is also a separate issue regarding members who have multiple memberships, multiple names, being a DIM and a CIM and other categories etc.

Membership database issues are a separate issue from the electronic voting system considered in this report, but I will mention that Experian will process databases of memberships to remove duplicates, check and validate addresses, and check against the deaths register if ever such a service is needed (this costs £1500). There may also be an issue of people buying multiple memberships and therefore multiple votes, but I would suggest that if anyone is sufficiently engaged in BCA matters to do this they should probably be recruited to council. Database issues should probably be discussed at some point with the relevant people around (Do we really still need the DIM and CIM system or could club members just give their membership numbers to club secretaries to prove insurance... I will not digress too much!)

Quotes

UK engage <https://www.uk-engage.org/>

£1200 per AGM – if on a yearly basis £1000 thereafter, based on an organisation of 5000 members. This is 24p per vote, then 20p thereafter.

All voting is done on their site, with vote codes (passwords) sent via email to members when the vote opens. This means they send out the emails to our membership -this is so that we cannot be accused of bias (only sending vote codes to certain demographics etc.)

This would mean we would need to have permission to share email addresses with a 3rd party – perhaps dealt with as an opt-in when renewing/gaining membership e.g “Would you like to vote in AGMs electronically? This means we share your email with our 3rd party voting provider, UK Engage”.

The price includes:

- The use of the platform hosted by them
- Their management of the vote e.g sending emails and dealing with it etc
- Email and telephone support for voters

Electoral Reform Services (ERS) <https://www.electoralreform.co.uk/>

£800 per AGM minimum, price changes based upon how many things there are to vote on. Otherwise roughly the same situation as the other provider, with similar levels of support.

Conclusion

An electronic voting system would take work but would be worthwhile in increasing participation. An increase in participation will make for a more effective organisation that better represents its members interests.

I propose that further consideration by council is given to this, and that the council aims to allow electronic voting in next years AGM (2019).

Item 25.2: Finance Committee Consideration of the CNCC paper on funding aspects

– Howard Jones

Present: David Cooke (CSCC), Angus Sawyer (DCA), Bernard Page (DCUC) , Peter Bann (CNCC) Howard Jones (Assist. Treasurer)

In attendance: Tim Allen (CNCC)

Purpose: To discuss CNCC changes to regional funding ideas and propose any changes to BCA Council

Process: 2 WebEx's were held on 1/11/18 and again 11/12/18. Various e mails and calls also occurred. The WebEx process was found to be very efficient. (see copies of the minutes of the 2 meetings below)

Proposals:

Information & Promotion: **Proposal:** that BCA gives a grant (value TBA) per annum to the P&I committee for them to distribute amongst the regions

Regional accounts: **Proposal:** all regions accounts should be published on BCA website.

Mileage allowance: **Proposal:** This should stay at 25p for single passengers but increase to 30p per mile if more than one passenger was in the vehicle. In line with HMRC thinking and promotes good practice.

C&A:

Proposal: Increase from £500 to £750 the value each region can spend on C&A activity without reference to Fin Com.

Proposal: Delete the word "all" from the 2.1 sentence so it now reads "To ensure the funding is spent for the benefit of BCA members".

Note: All proposals had a unanimous support except for the last one which was delegated to me to resolve.

Issues **NOT** agreed upon:

- 1) Currently BCA's policy is to spend its money for the benefit of its members. If non-members benefit as a by-product, for example entrance stabilisation works, then that is fine. The CNCC document proposes that principle be broadened out to non-members. This is a matter for Council, not the Finance Committee. **ACTION** Council
- 2) C&A: It was debated whether referral to the C&A committee before or by Fin Com in different situations was a good idea. The matter was well aired but an agreement could not be reached. **ACTION** Council

Appendix

1. Minutes of BCA Finance Committee WebEx 1/11/18

Present: David Cooke (CSCC), Angus Sawyer (DCA), Peter Bann (CNCC), Bernard Page (DCUC), Howard Jones (Assist. Treasurer)

Purpose: Discuss CNCC change to regional funding ideas and propose any changes to BCA Council

History: David explained history of BCA Regional Council Funding process and its rules. Its primary purpose is to allow BCA to budget its activities. BCA's financial model is that the vast

majority of cavers are not interested in BCA but want insurance via membership so long as the membership fees remain low. Therefore it is important that BCA controls its budget. The aim is to keep subs low. NCA had government grants to supplement its and Regional Council income, now gone. When BCA replaced NCA that changed. Regional councils no longer charged subs to their members (except non-BCA members), and BCA undertook to fund their core expenses. So most of their income now comes from BCA. BCA has paid all valid requests for funds from the regions to date.

Discussion:

Bernard: Could see higher value claims in future as some C&A activity outstanding.

Angus: external funding rule needs clarification. The issue is how the rules apply to any surplus made on an external grant. David agreed clarification is needed. We want to encourage applying for external grants. The current rule is aimed at preventing double claiming. **ACTION**

Peter: Promotional material funding needs clarification. David promotion material is excluded from core funding because it is an open ended cost. He suggested, as the funding document allows, that a grant be given to the P&I Committee for them to distribute as they see fit.

The use of online publication has reduced costs

Any publication that will make a profit will not be funded by BCA

David: Re the Regions submitted accounts, the Finance Committee likes to work from a position of trust. However it does require those accounts to be scrutinised by an external party. If the Finance Committee has doubts it reserves the power to see supporting documentation (cash book, receipts etc.).

To address transparency concerns all regions to publish their accounts once scrutinised on their local web sites, David will collate and put on BCA website, needed in PDF format. **ACTION**
David, et al

Regional accounts are in different formats, once can all be viewed by Finance Committee some common reporting can be explored.

David: BCA does not generally spend money on promoting caving but leaves that to clubs and regions. Did however fund the "So You Want To Go Caving" brochure. Uses Facebook, cheap but someone needs to update it.

David: BCA provides a free website package to the regions on its own server. This costs BCA nothing since the server has already been paid for. BCA does not fund regional websites hosted elsewhere since this would be a waste of money where a free alternative exists. If they choose not to then they need to fund their choice.

Mileage allowance. Thought to be a barrier to some volunteers as at 25p does not cover fuel for 4 by 4 vehicles. CNCC, surprisingly, doesn't pay travel expenses. The HMRC approved rate before tax becomes payable is 45p/mile for the first 10,000 miles, 25p thereafter. DCA has already increased to 45p per mile. The rate was raised to 25p when fuel cost last reached £1.40/l, since then the price dropped to £1 and then back up again. The fuel cost per mile at £1.40/l for a 40 mpg car is 16p, a 25mpg car is 25p and a 13mpg 4x4 is 45p.

This meeting shows the value of WebEx in saving travel costs. Bernard was in Spain.

Re C&A projects. The Finance Committee, as the funding document says (8.4.b), would seek advice from the C&A Committee should it need to establish a project is worthwhile or judge the merits of one project over another. The Finance Committees job is budgeting not judging C&A projects.

Currently BCA's policy is to spend its money for the benefit of its members. If non-members benefit as a by product, for example entrance stabilisation works, then that is fine. The CNCC document proposes that principle be broadened out to non-members. This is a matter for Council, not the Finance Committee. **ACTION** Council

Proposals:

Information & Promotion: **Proposal** that BCA gives a grant (value TBA) per annum to the P&I committee for them to distribute amongst the regions

Regional accounts: **Proposal** all regions accounts should be published on BCA website.

Further discussion needed:

Mileage allowance: Whether BCA adopt 45p per mile, in line with DCA and HMRC recommendation. **Action HJJ** to explore how much this would cost BCA annually.

C&A: to explore how BCA Finance Committee monitor future C&A spend to ensure BCA can afford to fund all C&A Calls.

2. Minutes of BCA Finance Committee WebEx 11/12/2018

Present: David Cooke (CSCC), Angus Sawyer (DCA), Howard Jones (Assist. Treasurer)

In attendance: Tim Allen (CNCC)

Purpose: Continue to discuss CNCC change to regional funding ideas and propose any changes to BCA Council (see also minutes of previous WebEx 1/11/2018)

Discussion:

Mileage allowance: Whether BCA adopts 45p per mile, in line with DCA and HMRC recommendation. It was estimated that to move to 45p would cost BCA some £4k in its own expenses, not including any regional refunds at that value. It was noted that 25p should cover fuel for all vehicles. It was noted HMRC allow a further 5p in a claim if more than one person travelled in the vehicle, i.e. 25p becomes 30p with 2 plus passengers. It was noted that CNCC do not refund their officers mileage.

C&A: to explore how BCA Finance Committee monitor future C&A spend to ensure BCA can afford to fund all C&A Calls.

See Appendix 1 below, notes prepared by Cookie prior to the call. It was noted the £500 level was set a long time ago and probably should be raised. It was noted that the wording of 2.1 was contradictory. It was debated whether referral to the C&A committee before or by Fin Com in different conditions was a good idea. (This was not agreed and hence will need to be a council decision) It was debated whether Fin Com alone being the arbiter of spend was promoting best C&A practice, or whether that was not their role. It was noted the regions had already vetted C&A projects before they put them forward for BCA funding.

Proposals:

Mileage allowance: Should stay at 25p for single passengers but increase to 30p per mile if more than one passenger was in the vehicle. In line with HMRC thinking and promotes good practice.

C&A:

Delete the word "all" from the 2.1 sentence so it now reads "To ensure the funding is spent for the benefit of BCA members."

Increase from £500 to £750 the value each region can spend on C&A activity without reference to Fin Com.

3. The Role of C&A Committee in Funding Regional Councils

Prepared for Finance Committee meeting 11/12/2018 by David Cooke

The Regional Caving Councils (RCC) are independent organisations with their own funds in addition to the core funding from BCA.

C&A in a region is handled by that RCC and BCA can't get involved unless invited to do so (BCA Constitution 2.1):

- A C&A Committee making value judgements about the work of the RCCs might be seen as contradicting this.

The Finance Committees (FC) role is to fund any C&A project subject to having the funds available. C&A funding is to be encouraged since this is a direct tangible benefit to members. A large C&A expenditure is a good thing. Hopefully we will remain in the position where the number of volunteers is the limiting factor rather than the funds available.

However the FC does need to budget ahead which the reason funding is set up as per the Funding Document with C&A work being submitted as costed projects.

To fund a C&A project the FC needs to establish that:

- That the project is a legitimate C&A project.
 - o This is a role of the Scrutiniser.
- The money has been spent and spent on the project in question.
- The money has been spent for the benefit of BCA members.
- That, as a minimum, access is available to all BCA member clubs.

The question is what role does C&A having in answering those questions. I'd suggest none.

If funds were tight then the FC might be put in a position of assigning a priority to projects. At which point you are more in the position of apportioning a grant. The FC would then consult the C&A Committee as set out at 8.4b in the Funding Document.

As things stand at the moment, with BCA well funded, a RCC needs only interact with one committee to be paid. Only in exceptional circumstances would two committees be needed.

Under the CNCC proposal RCCs:

- would face increased bureaucracy and have to interact with two committees in all circumstances.
- the C&A Committee would be making the fund or not fund decision. That is a budgeting decision for and the role of the FC.
- the C&A Committee tying funding to "standards" would be seen as intrusive meddling.
 - o what tape are you using? Red. You won't get funded unless you use orange.
- there are better ways to raise standards.
- from a political point of view it is better not to have a system where one group of people have to make value judgements about another group of people's work.

25.2a CNCC further comment and proposals – Tim Allen

CNCC further comment and proposals to the Finance Committee report for BCA council consideration. We request that these be discussed prior to any acceptance of the FC report.

1. The principal in 2.1 of the current funding document is contradicted in both practice and within the document itself. The CNCC propose that it would make best sense to remove the current line and replace with;

To ensure that funding is spent in accordance with the aims and guiding principles of the BCA constitution, BCA policy and best practice.

2. We believe all regional web sites should be supported by BCA. The CNCC runs a popular and informative web site which benefits all cavers. The site is expertly managed by our web master who is well respected for his work. There have been several security concerns over the BCA's own web services brought up at council meetings by members of council and the BCA IT

team itself. The CNCC prefer to use a different service provider to the BCA web services for practical and security reasons. We should not be penalised financially for taking this option. (NB; In the CHECC questionnaire, when asked where they got their information from, 15 respondents mentioned the CNCC site, there were four mentions of the DCA and no mention of the other regions.)

3. Our position on C&A funding remains the same. The finance committee have made clear that they do not scrutinise C&A funding in any way and that their role is concerned only with ensuring there is adequate finance available. There is no process to ensure BCA's own rules are met, nor to improve standards or ensure common best practice is adopted. As a compromise we suggest the threshold for day to day C&A funding is raised but that for 'projects' or 'parcels of work' (as described in the original document) the C&A committee is consulted for advice and approval.

4. We support the proposal that the P&I group be given a budget to support regional newsletters, promotional material etc. However, we do not agree that the funding document allows for this at the moment as stated. The Cambrian rep came to a council meeting a couple of years ago with a request to at least fund the conservation part of the Cambrian newsletter. In his response, the BCA treasurer was absolutely clear that there was no funding for regional newsletters. Promoting caving in all its forms and formats should be given a much higher priority at BCA and that should include financial support.

5. Admin costs for DCA and CSCC are pro rata's according to membership type. This does not affect CNCC but we do appreciate that the work of regional councils does benefit all cavers. Funding all admin costs for regional councils would simplify accounting and the amounts of money involved seem small.

6. Clarification is required on the external funding rule. Obviously there should be no double claiming (does that really happen?) but equally the rule should not be used to discourage regional councils from their ambitions. There should be no requirement to exhaust reserves or seek alternative funding before BCA meet regional funding commitments.

We suggest new rules and clarifications should be incorporated into a revised regional funding document which can be distributed for final comment ahead of the March council meeting.

Item 25.3 Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (CHECC)

Questionnaire report – *Tim Allen*

Introduction: The CHECC Forum is a well-attended annual event and one of the few occasions where young cavers are brought together in number. Following discussions between Hellie Adams, Tim & Jane Allen a short questionnaire was developed to ask the opinion of the younger caver on behalf of the BCA Vision and Reform Group and the Publications and Information Officer. The questionnaire took the form of a single A4 sheet of paper and was completed on Sunday 25th November 2018. The results have been collated into this report by Tim Allen.

Short summary for BCA council.

86 questionnaires were returned. The average age of respondents was 23 years old who had been caving on average 3.7 years. 56% were men, 31% women with the rest giving no gender.

Q1. Are you a member of the British Caving Association (BCA)? Only 65% knew they were members of BCA. However, most if not all were members. 16 out of the 18 who said they were not members of BCA also gave their BCA member club name for example.

Q2. What does BCA do for cavers? What does BCA do for you? A high number, 43 respondents, mentioned insurance which might be expected. 25 mentioned BCA as a governing body or representing cavers. 22 mentioned access rights/access campaign, which suggests the BCA CRoW campaign has been well noted among young cavers. 'Don't know' was next highest with no other service achieving a high score.

Q3. What more, if anything, could BCA do for student caving? The highest answer by far (30) was that respondents did not know what more BCA could do for student caving. 12 wanted to see more support of clubs and/or interaction with the university or student union. 11 wanted to see more involvement/visibility generally from BCA. 11 also mentioned more funding.

Q4. Where do you get your information about caves and caving from? A large number (65) got there caving information from friends, the club or word of mouth. The highest specific place to be mentioned was Ukcaving with 32. This may not be surprising as Ukcaving has supported the CHECC forum for the last three years. Guide books featured well for information on caves. Of the regional councils the CNCC received 13 specific mentions due to their informative web site and social media presence. The DCA received 4 mentions. No mention was made of any other regional council. Facebook specifically (10) and 'on-line' generally also featured. There was no mention of Descent magazine

Q5. What medium is best for BCA to use to pass on information to student cavers? The internet was dominant here. Specifically Facebook 38, email 31 & Ukcaving 15. General mentions of social media/web/internet 28.

Q6. Would you like to receive information from BCA? 70% said yes. 14% said no. 5% maybe. The rest blank.

Q7. What methods should BCA use to try to contact you or pass on information about caving? Email dominant at 48 mentions (including club email). 13 were willing enough to write down their actual email address. Facebook (15) and Ukcaving (7) also featured as did a number of other social media sites but no mention of Instagram. The overall conclusion I draw is that BCA needs to promote what it does better and be much more informative over a range of social media platforms.

Full results:

Number: 86 cavers participated in the questionnaire. 73 filled them out before the start of the AGM. Other questionnaires were left with reception and a further 13 were completed.

Age: 76 respondents gave their age. The average age of these was 23.15 years

Gender: 49 Male. 27 Female. 10 gave no gender.

Years caving. 77 responded to this question. The average number of years caving was 3.7

Question 1 – Are you a member of the British Caving Association (BCA)?

Yes – 56 No – 18 Don't know – 11 Left blank – 1

NB; Of the 18 who answered *no*, 16 gave their club name which was a member of BCA.

Question 2 – What does BCA do for cavers? What does BCA do for you?

Insurance - 43

Acting as governing body/authority, general organisation and representing cavers – 25

Access rights and campaign – 22

Don't know, no knowledge of BCA, left blank – 21

Funding/finance – 6

Supporting regions/clubs – 3

Bolts – 3

Organising Hidden earth/events – 2

Caving community growth - 2
Library – 1
Training – 1
Science BCRA – 1
Cave rescue – 1
Conservation - 1

Question 3 – What more, if anything, could BCA do for student caving?

Left blank or don't know – 30
Support clubs more, promote/interact with uni/student union – 12
More involvement, visibility generally – 11
Funding – 11
More interaction with CHECC – 4
Training – 4
Organise workshops/events – 4
Easier insurance – 2
Access support/info – 2
Expedition insurance - 1

Question 4 – Where do you get your information about caves and caving from?

Club, friends, word of mouth – 65
Ukcaving – 32
Guide books, surveys – 26
CNCC - 13
Facebook specific – 10
On line/the web – 8
DCA – 4
Ogof site – 2
Darkness Below – 2
BCA – 1
New to caving - 1
Hidden Earth - 1

Question 5 – What medium is best for BCA to use to pass on information to student cavers?

Facebook – 38
Email – 31
Social media/the internet – 28
Ukcaving – 15
Blank – 5
BCA delegates - 1
Books for students - 1
Orally - 1
No need to - 1
Twitter - 1
CHECC talks - 1
Through committees - 1

Question 6 – Would you like to receive information from BCA?

Yes – 60 No – 12 Blank – 8 Maybe - 4

Comments;

If it's interesting

Only occasionally

Only through the club

When relevant

Already do

Wanted surveys

Question 7 – What methods should BCA use to try to contact you or pass on information about caving?

Email – 43 NB; 13 gave actual email address

Club email – 5

Blank – 18

Facebook – 15

Ukcaving – 7

No thanks – 5

Internet – 4

Social media – 2

Whats app – 2

Text – 2

Mail lists – 1

Regional websites – 1

Via CHECC – 1

Current method – 1