

JANUARY 12, 2019



COUNCIL MINUTES

SPANSET, MIDDLEWICH

PRESENT

Name	Initial	Role	Voting?
Les Williams	LW	Chair	Yes
Robin Weare	RW	Acting Treasurer	Yes #
Nigel Atkins	NA	Training Officer	Yes
Andrew Hinde	AH	Conservation & Access Officer	Yes
Mark Sims	MS	Equipment and Techniques Officer	Yes
Jane Allen	JA	Publications and Information Officer	Yes
Allan Richardson	AR	CCC Rep.	Yes
Tim Allen	TA	CNCC Rep	Yes
Jenny Potts	JP	DCA Rep.	Yes
Tony Radmall	TR	ASCT Rep.	Yes
Steve Holding	SH	NAMHO Rep.	Yes
David Botcherby	DB	CHECC Rep.	Yes
David Cooke	DC	Club Rep. and Registry and ITWP Convenor	Yes
John Hine	JH	Club Rep.	Yes
Mark Richardson	MR	Individual Rep.	Yes
Will Burn	WB	Individual Rep.	Yes
Louise Baddeley	LB	Individual Rep.	Yes
Andrew McLeod	AM	Individual Rep.	Yes
Chris Boardman	CB	Safeguarding Officer	No
Andy Eavis	AE	Media Liaison/UIS Rep.	No
Ged Campion	GC	FSE Rep.	No
Gethin Thomas	GT	QMC Rep.	No
Wendy Williams	WW	Membership administrator	No
Howard Jones	HJ	Insurance Manager/Assistant Treasurer	No/Yes #
Matt Ewles	ME	Minute taker, observer	No
Gary Douthwaite	GD	Observer	No

HJ appointed acting Treasurer part way through meeting thus gaining vote at this point; RW was concurrently appointed acting Secretary thus retaining vote.

1. Chairman's Welcome

LW opened the meeting at 10:34am.

- TA introduced Pete Ward (PW), SpanSet host and an active caver and former accountant.
- PW welcomed everyone and introduced Spanset. He introduced the video conferencing facilities, emphasising their use to the company for product demos, helping to avoid lots of travel and allowing more efficient communication. He acknowledged the differences to conventional face to face meetings and the challenges of multiple online participants. The Chair can mute all other participants to help facilitate order, therefore chairing of a video conference meeting is different. The designation of a specific person to deal with muting/unmuting video participants is recommended.

- TA suggested that there was no need for a specific video conference chair for this meeting as only two online participants (MS and MR) and this meeting is intended mainly as a demo of the capabilities. This may be worth considering for future meetings.
- Various technical questions about video conferencing capabilities followed, however, the key emphasis was that discipline is needed to keep order and it was suggested the creation of regional hubs where video participants could gather to help avoid excessive numbers of individual participants.
- PW provided some housekeeping information on the venue and departed.
- JA requested to take some photos of the meeting later (during lunch) and emphasised that if anyone did not wish to be in them to feel free to opt out.
- LW asked for introductions from all around the table (done)

2. Apologies

RW read out the list of apologies that had been submitted in advance: Juliet Parker-Smith, David Rose, Idris Williams, Alan Butcher, Bernie Woodley, David Jean, Richard Vooght, Hellie Adams. An additional apology was presented on the day from Stephan Natynczuk. Mark Sims and Mark Richardson were not at the meeting but were present throughout via video conference. Ged Campion joined by video link (from Australia) just for discussing his report.

3. Minutes of the last Council meeting.

- LW asked if the plan was to approve the minutes under this section.
- With respect to Section 14 of the minutes: (*"It was agreed that JA should go ahead with producing a new logo and leaflet, that any redesign of the website be considered only after the Vision working group had reported, that the newsletter continue as an electronic production and that the other suggestions be revisited after full discussion by the P&I standing committee"*), JA had no recollection that her remit for looking at the BCA logo and website was limited until the Vision working group had reported. She believed this to be incorrect.
- RW believed the minutes to be accurate as they had been prepared independently and reviewed by both him and LW shortly after the meeting. JA restated that she had no recollection of the Vision group being involved in matters relating to the website.
- DC believed that the Vision group was mentioned, but as part of the change from the BCA moving towards actively promoting caving.
- RW said that the digital recording of the meeting had failed and was thus not available, and we only have the contemporaneous notes from the last meeting and the first draft from a few days later to verify what was agreed. JA apologised for only noticing this issue now.
- Regarding section 5.2 of the minutes. DC commented that this had been misreported in the minutes and this should read; *"DC said that the April draft minutes misreported that there had been a late issue of the newsletter"*.

- Regarding section 5.3 (action log); DC asked what a draft E&D document was (was this meant to be Y&D or E&T)? It was confirmed that this is Equality and Diversity. LB clarified that this should just be an Equality Document, not an Equality and Diversity document.
- DC asked for clarification of TOR; confirmed to be Terms of Reference
- Regarding section 13; DC added that as part of this discussion about payment of the CNCC for the IC anchors, it was noted that Simon Wilson (CNCC E&T representative) has confirmed he was happy for his anchor design to be produced by other regions. MS and TA said they weren't aware that Simon had said this, but MR emphasised that all the designs are freely available on the IC anchor website. GT confirmed that he was at the meeting where Simon first presented the IC anchor and the E&T minutes from the time should confirm that Simon was happy for the design to be replicated in other regions.
- The minutes were progressed to a vote and LW asked if anyone was against. Nobody was against so the minutes were accepted subject to the above clarifications.

Action; Finalised minutes subject to above clarifications/corrections

- ME asked for some clarification about the voting process. Shouldn't we be having a show of hands 'for' 'against' and 'abstentions'? LW confirmed no; an absence of anyone against a motion was taken as acceptance.
- TA felt that the Vision group/website matter raised earlier by JA was still problematic and had not been resolved. RW said he had no doubt whatsoever that the minutes were correct, however, WB was not so sure; he believed that a much bigger discussion would have ensured had the intention been for the website to wait until 2020 when the Vision group reported. JP suggested suspended accepting the minutes pending clarification of this point. LW said that this meeting could simply overturn the previous minutes, thus removing the requirement to wait for the vision group to report before pursuing the new website.

There were no objections raised to this and so this decision has been overturned.

4. Matters arising from the minutes of the last Council meeting

RW went through the action log from the agenda. The following additional points were raised:

- Regarding feedback on the safeguarding policy; David Rose was thought to be the person referred to.
- RW provided an update on the Charterhouse legal question. He had spoken with WB and consulted the CSCC Chair who had confirmed that we may approach Charterhouse. He had then consulted Charterhouse for approval of BCA involvement. It was confirmed that the Charterhouse AGM required the directors to wait for BCA to obtain a legal opinion before moving on. RW had prepared a brief for Counsel which was slightly redrafted by a solicitor (working pro bono) and had then sought a Barrister who was prepared to accept the brief under the public access scheme. After some price related negotiation Counsel was instructed. Counsel's advice arrived earlier this week and is currently under consideration.

- TA asked about the cost of this legal advice; Confirmed to be £1275+VAT. RW felt that the approach of the Charterhouse group and their legal advisor was very positive; he commended this and the research by WB and Nick Williams prior to his involvement.
- TA felt that the Charterhouse matter was a regional access issue and asked what role the Conservation and Access Committee have had in all of this? RW confirmed that the C&A has not been involved; AH clarified that C&A have to be invited to get involved in regional access issues; they have not been invited. WB said that this had been dealt with more as a complaint from an individual BCA member rather than as a C&A matter.
- AM asked whether there was a plan to publish the legal advice? RW said the barrister has advised strongly against this. LW felt that the legal advice is only an opinion, could impact on other access issues. It is available if needed but LW also advised against publishing.
- TA drew parallels to the Dinah Rose legal advice on CRoW, which was made public with all supporting documents for transparency. TA suggested this reflected an inconsistency in the BCA's approach to legal advice. RW said that Tim's comments were noted.
- Regarding the AGM minutes; RW has published these as drafts and has circulated by email his reason for truncating them.

5. Applications for membership

Two applications for membership had been received:

Birmingham Students Caving Club: Proposed by JA, seconded by DB

Derby Underground Darkspaces Exploration Society (DUDES): Proposed by JP, seconded by AR

- WW said that Swansea and Cardiff University clubs were considering becoming members. AR asked whether we could pre-approve their application for when it arrives to help support student cavers; however, this was not agreed due to constitutional reasons.

LW asked if we should vote for the two clubs together; confirmed; no objections. Both clubs are now approved for membership of the British Caving Association on completion of the relevant procedures.

- JP commented that it would be helpful for new clubs elected to the BCA if WW (as membership administrator) could send their contact details to their regional council. There is a mistaken belief that acceptance of BCA membership means Regional Councils automatically become aware of them. WW believed that the way people tick their Regional Council affiliation on applying for membership is inconsistent and is not being done correctly (some people tick all of them). JP believed however that if Regional Councils at least had contact details then they could reach out directly to new BCA members to see if they want to get involved in their Regional Council.

6. Chair report (Les Williams)

- At the commencement of the Chair report, AH made a request; that agenda item 25.2a (CNCC response, regional funding proposals) be moved to higher up the agenda. LW suggested that it could be dealt with under the Treasurer section.
- TA raised LW's comment from his report to get the Committees to do more work. TA felt the CNCC would support that ambition however expressed concern that not all Committees and Working Groups are up to speed or established yet and this is holding up many areas of progress for the Council. TA believed that matters should not be pushed into a Working Group if no such group is suitably established to deal with it; Such matters could be dealt with directly by Council. TA asked that if the Council exists only to 'rubber stamp' the decisions of Committees and Working Groups, what was the point of the face to face meetings?
- LW emphasised his belief that the Standing Committees and Working Groups should be doing the work and consulting on matters put to them sufficiently that when they come to Council, all consultation has already taken place and only final approval is needed. LW cited that achieving this was a personal ambition as Chairman.
- TA asked whether it was possible to ask Council to deal with a matter directly (rather than sending it out to a Standing Committee or Working Group). LW said that as part of dealing with the matter, the Council may decide it has to go to a Standing Committee or Working Group, who need to talk to each other to ensure all matters are properly discussed before coming to Council. TA restated his question; Can people specifically request that a matter is considered by Council direction and not put out to a Standing Committee or Working Group. LW reiterated his earlier reply that the Council has the right to send matters to a Standing Committee or Working Group. It is not the default decision to do this; but LW was keen to use this option to cut down on the burden to the Council and to keep meetings shorter.
- NA said that he used to bring pages of material to Council meetings, however, the Standing Committee has reduced this and made life easier.
- LW confirmed that the Thai rescue divers have been presented with their tankards and believed that we, as cavers, should be celebrating their recognition. JA asked if there were any photos of the presentation of the tankards; LW believed that they did exist including the one from Hidden Earth. LW said we were immensely proud of them; They are all BCA members.
- TA believed that the Thai rescue had done an enormous amount for caving.
- LW acknowledged the UK and Thai team working 'behind the scenes' who have all contributed to raising the profile of caving.

7. Secretary report – No report as post vacant

8. Acting Treasurer report (Robin Weare)

- RW introduced HJ as the Insurance Manager and who is to be proposed as Acting Treasurer.
- RW confirmed that he would be dealing with the 2018 accounts preparation and would

appreciate for all claims relating to 2018 be sent to HJ as soon as possible.

- Three of five Regional Councils have their funding cleared for 2017; two not yet. RW clarified that the regional funding listed in his report does not fully represent the only funding given to Regional Councils, for example the CNCC anchor payment. TA emphasised that those anchors (650 IC anchors at a total cost of ~£3900) will benefit all cavers who visit the Dales, and not just the CNCC as an organisation.
- RW commented that before the BCA, individual regions funded their own expenditures, but since forming, the BCA have funded Regional Councils. However, that has allowed Regional Councils to hold onto funds that would have been used in pre-BCA days to fund their C&A and bolting projects e.g. from the sale of rigging guides and guide books and that CNCC & DCA had accumulated bank balances in the region of £20000. The other councils less.
- TA clarified that when the National Caving Association was about, regions had individual members paying subscriptions. The aim of the BCA was to change this and collect money centrally for redistribution.
- RW reiterated his point that regions have kept the other income generated since BCA.
- JP clarified that the DCA did not produce rigging guides for sale; they were produced by a separate club. RW clarified that he believed he had said guide books when referring to DCA.
- RW said that the no-claims rebate from the BCA insurers was now coming through; 2015 is now in and payments for later years are in the pipeline.
- RW praised WW as membership secretary.
- The interest rate for renewal of the BCA term deposit account was 1.8% and accepted as being a good deal. There is an intention to increase the balance of this account, while keeping it below the value which is backed by the Government protection scheme (£85000).
- JA asked for clarification whether RW was the acting BCA Secretary; RW confirmed no.
- RW said whilst removing website references to individuals who were no longer contact points he had been appalled by how out of date some of the content is. He emphasised that this is not DC's responsibility, nor is it the responsibility of the Secretary as it is a content, not technical issue. He appealed to the various Standing Committees to play a more proactive role in keeping the website content up to date.

Action for all Standing Committees/Working Groups: Review website content and update.

- LB has agreed to keep the Council list up to date. She suggested she should have a proper BCA contact email for this purpose; to be discussed offline.

Action; All, please update LB with who you are and what position you have.

- RW acknowledged the hard work of DC and David Gibson in looking after the CIM and DIM membership respectively, and also thanked WW for her efforts.

- RW raised the matter that five clubs in the BCA had four members or less. LW felt that this was abusing the system and that it was not fair that these small clubs had the same weighted vote as a very large club. CB said that he was a member of one such small club, mainly to get Casterton Fell permits. TA summarised efforts to roll the online booking system out to this region, thus soon negating the need to form a club just to gain access to Casterton and Leck Fells.
- DC felt that we shouldn't be actively removing these smaller clubs but perhaps could contact them to encourage them to increase their membership.
- AM felt that we should instead be focussing on working towards removing the need for these small clubs to exist in the first place (i.e. removing need to be a club to get access). TA, in reference to his earlier comment, said that the CNCC were working on this.
- RW read out the full letter from the SUI (which is summarised in the report). LW reminded everyone that the previous Insurance Manager used to have a very pragmatic view on other clubs who we choose to extend our insurance to. SH said he understood that for a club to be a BCA member, all members have to be BCA members too, and are thus insured.
- RW asked if the Council had any objection to the broad concept of what is suggested in his report regarding the SUI?
- DB has looked into the SUI's situation; their cost of membership is very high. This measure would allow a lot more individuals to engage with the SUI. RW understood that this was more related to academics and non-caving associates rather than to cavers. DB said that the SUI did not have different categories of membership in the way the BCA do (e.g. caving/non-caving). WW said that this was their decision; surely it would be better for them to harmonise their classes of membership with ours?
- LW commented that if the Council are happy, RW and HJ should look into possible ways to make the suggestions in the report work. DC commented that this situation was very complex, and we should leave discussions on how to achieve this with RW/HJ. LW asked the room for any objections in principle; none.

Action: RW/HJ to look into ways forward for the SUI matter and report back.

At this point in the meeting GC joined by video link from Australia.

- RW confirmed that the BCA has received an offer from the Yorkshire Subterranean Society (YSS) to co-host the BCA AGM in June. He has accepted subject to Council approval and asked if the Council was happy with this; No objections were raised.
- TA suggested moving to GC's report at this point (Agenda item 22), as he was now online (and it was nearing midnight in Australia). GC summarised his FSE Report verbally.
- JA asked GC to please send her anything that needs promoting to cavers. The BCA are now more active on social media. GC emphasised that the FSE newsletter contains lots of information and is available from the FSE website, with a link in the BCA newsletter. JA said that it was very time consuming to trawl through all the different websites and newsletters searching for news and would appreciate people feeding any snippets of news directly to her.

GC logged off from the meeting at this point.

8.1 Insurance Manager (Howard Jones)

- HJ said that his first job as insurance manager has been to arrange the renewal for 2019. A lower rate had been negotiated for non-cavers, and members will now be covered for rambling, not just as part of club meets.
- HJ said that there are a decreasing number of expedition policies available, and the BCA are actively pursuing a policy that will cover the worst-case scenarios (rescue, death). Currently looking into possible policy with PJ Hayman.
- AM asked about Dogtag; however, they state that require a qualification present underground (e.g. CIC) for the policy to be valid. However, they have been contacted and have emailed to confirm that this is actually not a requirement; we have this in writing now.
- HJ believed that there are only six viable expedition policies available. He gave the example of the Thai rescue; imagine if this had been a British diver stuck in the cave. The BCA need to be confident that the costs of a complex rescue, death or maiming is covered, and not just the trivial matters (e.g. losing passport). Discussions were ongoing to confirm this. LW asked about whether non-British nationals involved would be covered; HJ will investigate.

Action: HJ continue to investigate expedition insurance policy.

- LW asked whether the expedition policy will be available by mid-April; HJ confirmed that this was the intention.
- AR brought up the matter of eliminating the BCA membership cards. He said that there are some situations in mine exploration where these are necessary to prove BCA membership. If these are removed, what alternatives are there? HJ said that anyone can email to receive a confirmation statement, or print off the 'To whom it may concern' (Broker's confirmation of cover) letter from the BCA website.
- RW said that he felt having a fresh set of eyes (HJ) looking at these things had been positive.

8.2. Membership Administrator (Wendy Williams)

- WW gave statistics for so far in 2019: 181 DIMs, 24 groups, 707 CIMs.
- WW confirmed that the paper renewal form for DIMs has not yet gone out; if people have provided an email address, they will not receive a paper form. RW felt that the majority of DIMs are already signed up for BCA online.
- JA emphasised the use of social media to talk to the membership and encourage renewal and provision of email addresses.

- JA asked whether Direct Debit could be used for payment of membership; RW said maybe, but there may be bank issues; suggested to talk to HJ outside of the meeting. DC highlighted that Direct Debit is quite expensive but Go Cardless is being investigated. GD vouched for Go Cardless; only 1% charge on transactions and a maximum of £2/transaction.
- TA said that in 2017 the BCA collected the birth year of members to allow the age demographic to be examined. A retired statistician has looked over the data. Around 2500 people provided their year of birth, so it is unclear whether the data could be biased by older members being more unlikely to withhold this information. WW emphasised that there are some clubs who withhold lots of data (email addresses, year of birth, gender), however, many do, and she will be able to provide this year's data by 31st March.

Lunch break 12:45. Meeting recommenced 13:50

8.3. Training and QMC Terms of Reference (Alan Butcher)

RW said that there was nothing to add here; the process will continue.

25.2. Regional Funding (Howard Jones) and 23. Appointments

Item 25.2 brought forward from later in agenda at earlier request of AH. HJ said that the reason this was positioned after item 23 (appointments) was to allow him to be appointed Acting Treasurer and thus have a vote on the regional funding matters. It was agreed to bring item 23 forward to now. RW resigned as Acting Treasurer. HJ was proposed as Acting Treasurer.

HJ for Acting Treasurer: Proposed by RW, seconded by TA, unanimous votes in favour.

Paul Ibberson as Scrutineer: Proposed by DC, seconded by TR, unanimous votes in favour.

RW said that we need a new long term Secretary. He is willing to take it on as Acting Secretary for the next six months but will not stand at the AGM. If nobody else comes forward at the AGM he will be prepared to continue as Acting Secretary for up to 12 months to try to mentor a new Secretary into the role.

RW as Acting Secretary: No proposer/seconded taken. 2 votes against, 3 abstentions, carried.

Discussions then moved onto the Regional Funding section (25.2)

- HJ provided a background; In previous meetings the CNCC had brought forward proposals on changes to the way regional funding is administered. This was put out to the Finance Committee (FC) for discussion. The process worked well and HJ would strongly recommend this approach to dealing with such complex matters.
- TA emphasised that the original expectation would be that the Council would deal with these proposals; not the Finance Committee. He did not believe the FC was adequately constructed to be making decisions about what the BCA should and should not be funding. He emphasised that there is no disrespect intended to the five regional Treasurers, but he believes that their main role should be to administer finances and not decide policy. He gave the example of the CNCC

Treasurer, who does an excellent job as Treasurer, but doesn't want to be involved in politics or BCA policy making. There is a similar situation in the CCC (confirmed by AR). TA said he stood in for the CNCC Treasurer at the last FC meeting and the DCA and CCC reps supported the CNCC proposals. He felt that the FC should not be dictating policy of what should and should not be funded unless their construction is amended to include much larger representation.

- LW emphasised that policy is decided by an AGM; the Council simply make interim decisions. He did not believe that the FC were being asked to make policy; only recommendations. He felt that our role in this meeting should be to decide whether to back the recommendations of the FC that were unanimously put forward in response to the CNCC proposals, and to discuss in more detail the proposals where the FC could not reach a unanimous recommendation.
- LW asked whether we should vote on-bloc for all the unanimous FC recommendations? RW said he would prefer to go through each one individually.
- **Information and promotion proposal:** TA was unhappy that the original CNCC proposal (which included specific mention of money being available for regional newsletters) had been changed to remove mention of newsletters. TA highlighted that the FC guidelines say that funding newsletters is not permitted; so, do we need to remove this restriction? RW pointed out that if it was decided to fund regional newsletters it could be done from the P & I budget and that FC need not be involved. RW suggested that it could be stated that other sources of funding are available. TA asked again whether we could remove the FC guidelines restrictions on newsletters; TA expressed concern that newsletters had been removed from the CNCC proposal; and concurrently, there was no willingness to remove a specific restriction on newsletters from the current guidelines. RW said that to change the FC guidelines document, it would need to be sent back to the FC for consideration rather than being adjusted 'on the fly' at this meeting. LW rounded up the discussions by suggesting the matter is reverted to the FC to review the document; No objections.

Action: FC further review guideline document in light of above discussion.

- **Regional accounts proposal:** RW said he does not believe we should force the autonomous Regional Councils to publish their accounts on the BCA website, as Regional Council accounts can already be found on the individual Regional Council website. AH expressed that as it is BCA money being used to fund Regional Councils, it was fair that details of how this was being spent is on the BCA website. RW felt this would need agreement from all regional councils. WB asked whether Regional Councils could choose to not reveal how they spend their money; RW clarified the current process (i.e. all Regional Councils submit their accounts to the FC for scrutiny). TA said that he had emailed RW several times last year and struggled to get clarity in how money was being spent across the different regions. RW had pointed out that the CNCC Treasurer had access to this information and could provide it to CNCC; however, TA had reverted to RW for the answers. TA concluded that this information was not sufficiently freely available. At this point, the proposal as put forward by the FC were proposed by HJ and seconded by TA. However JP put forward a second proposal; "Links to all regional accounts should be published on the BCA website". This was seconded by AR. HJ emphasised that he doesn't care how it is published; he just wants transparency in how BCA money is spent. HJ withdrew the original proposal and said he was happy to accept the second proposal; 1 abstention, 1 against, therefore accepted.

Action: Links to Regional Council accounts to be published on BCA Website.

- **Mileage allowance:** RW estimated that his petrol costs are around 15p/mile. When travelling with other cavers he contributes towards the petrol cost. He expressed concern that accepting this proposal for increased mileage would be viewed as the BCA Council member voting to their own financial benefit. The proposal was made by HJ and seconded by JA. HJ clarified that 'single passengers' means driver-only, and said that the proposal was simply in line with the HMRC guidance. MR asked how much this would cost the BCA; HJ estimated that the current mileage cost to the BCA for meetings was £5000/year and that this would rise to ~£6200/year. DB felt that video conferencing would save money; and the extra allowance for carrying passengers would encourage car sharing. Voting; 1 against, 1 abstention, carried.

Action: Travel expenses to rise to 25p/mile or 30p/mile if additional passengers.

- **Conservation and Access:** RW clarified that this was a proposal to increase the maximum amount that could be claimed without prior referral to the FC. Proposed by HJ, seconded by JA, unanimously accepted.
- **Deletion of the word 'all' from section 2.1 of the FC guideline document:** TA felt that some BCA spending was not to the benefit of all BCA members. He emphasised that he has no objection to this but felt that the wording needed to reflect this without applying the current restriction that funding has to benefit all members. TA highlighted the CNCC's counter-proposal (**CNCC further comment and proposals, section 25.2a in reports document**). DC expressed concern that this counter-proposal would mean that the FC have to consider the entire BCA constitution when funding a project, rather than just one sentence. DC felt that the FC had come up with a perfectly suitable proposal; is TA not happy with this? TA felt that we shouldn't be funding anything that isn't in the principles of BCA best practice and that some guidance should be in place to ensure this. RW feared that the further CNCC proposal was adding bureaucracy to the FC, but TA disagreed believing that you can't have money being spent without the appropriate scrutiny. RW asked who better to scrutinise something that the five regional council treasurers? TA felt it wasn't much to expect for spending to be in line with the BCA constitution. DC believed there needed to be some element of trust in the FC to get this right. TA asked whether anyone would second the CNCC's further proposal; AH seconded. The revised CNCC proposal was voted upon; 6 against, 6 abstentions, 5 in favour; FAILS. Therefore, fall back to the original FC proposal by HJ; seconded by JP; 0 against, 4 abstentions, 14 in favour; carried.

Action: FC Guideline document to be updated accordingly.

Consideration then turned to the issues that the FC had not been able to agree upon:

- **Spending money on non-members:** HJ emphasised that this was more in the realm of policy setting which was beyond the remit of the FC. TA explained that the DCA and CSCC membership includes non-BCA members, and their payments are pro-rata to this (i.e. adjusted down on the basis that money cannot benefit non-members). TA felt this created unnecessary bureaucracy for a very low value deduction to payments. JP felt that it was impossible to discriminate between whether BCA members or non-members benefitted from the work they do. LW asked if everyone was in agreement that the FC should reimburse regional councils without pro-rata adjustment of the amount for their ratio of BCA/non-BCA members. All agreed.

Action: Discontinue pro-rata adjustment of payments due to non-BCA members in Regional Councils.

- C&A: TA suggested that this is deferred to a future meeting.

Additional CNCC proposals:

- TA felt that the BCA should fund all Regional Council websites regardless of the server provider. He emphasised that the costs are very low and so this was more a matter of principle. LW asked whether everyone was happy with this; RW felt that Regional Councils are perfectly capable of funding websites with their own money if they were not prepared to use a BCA website provided at no charge to them and no additional cost to BCA. GD (CNCC webmaster) commented that his company provides server space to the CNCC for free, on the basis that it is a matter of convenience for him as webmaster. He would not seek to start charging if BCA were willing to pay for this, as he is aware that it could be done for free if he did choose to use BCA servers. AR asked whether Regional Councils could go to the P&I to get money for this? The end outcome of the discussion was the suggestion to defer website funding matters to the P&I instead.

9. Conservation and Access Standing Committee (Andrew Hinde)

No matters arising; LW reminded everyone that AH is stepping down in June and we are looking for a replacement.

10. Youth and Development Standing Committee (Rostam Namaghi)

- WB said that Rostam would suggest that the loan given to LUCC for equipment is written off (for future discussion).
- DB added that the BCA website now includes a guidance document for university clubs.

11. Equipment and Techniques Standing Committee (Mark Sims)

- MS provided a verbal summary of his report, explaining the matter of resin shrinkage. Regarding the Climbing Technology anchors referenced in the report: MS clarified that there are very few commercially available anchors to fulfil all required criteria. The CNCC E&T rep (Simon Wilson) is keen that in the future we pursue a commercially available product instead of the IC anchor, thus meaning the anchors can be available to all caving regions.

11.1 Rope Testing Officer (Bob Mehew)

Nothing to add except RW believed some rope testing had occurred earlier this week.

12. Training Standing Committee (Nigel Atkins)

NA out of the room at this point; so this section was actually covered after section 13; however is presented here in the minutes to avoid confusion. Only a few comments:

- RW suggests that NA writes a newsletter article to broadcast all the training opportunities.
- NA felt that things with the QMC were progressing in the right direction despite getting off to a shaky start last year.

13. Publications and Information Standing Committee (Jane Allen)

JA worked through the various sections of her report:

- JA brought up the BCA Facebook page on screen to display the new BCA advert; this has been designed by GD and is intended to replace the current advert in Descent.
- JA felt strongly that if we are running the adverts partly to support Descent, we should be getting some recognition for this; LW felt that Chris Howes would be happy to give the BCA credit if we opened a dialogue. JA emphasised that there is absolutely no negativity towards Descent. DC said that we are free to use those adverts to achieve whatever we want. WB said that the point here was that they are not value for money in terms of what we are trying to achieve (i.e. reaching as many people as possible with an advert).
- JA is currently in the process of getting the P&I Committee together and is hoping for a first meeting in March.
- Regarding a new logo; JA is aiming to put proposals on this to the AGM; Do we want a new logo, and if so which one of the various options do we want?
- RW said that a group of students have put together several marketing campaigns for the BCA as a project and have put on two presentations about these. He would be attending a feedback session in February and would pass details on to JA. TA added that David Rose has written an article on this.
- JA handed around a draft 'new to caving' leaflet, intended for giving to showcaves, Scouts, Duke of Edinburgh participants, etc, to promote the New to Caving website which has been adopted by the BCA; 10000's of these leaflets could be produced at quite small cost. JA asked for thoughts from everyone present; they were generally positive.
- Regarding the website; JA said that she had asked GD to prepare a proof of what a potential new BCA website could look like if the decision was made to redevelop this; this was displayed on-screen. JA said that her brief to GD was that it should be attractive and welcoming to all; those seeking to get involved in caving and existing cavers alike.
- JA asked how she should go forward with respect to setting up the Standing Committee; RW summarised the requirements of the constitution and added that in addition to those fixed appointments a standing committee could co-opt members. The webmaster and newsletter editor were already co-opted members of P&I committee.
- DC asked JA how much of this new website had been discussed with him, as the currently elected webmaster? JA said she wanted to get a proof together to show what a new website could look like; further discussion on it needs the P&I Committee to convene, and JA would like DC to be involved in this. DC felt it was offensive that he has not been asked earlier.
- CB said that it was absolutely improper for this website proof to be presented to the Council before the P&I Committee have convened and before due process has been completed.

- ME asked why nobody in the room seemed to be even remotely excited about this website proof? He felt it looked great and couldn't believe what CB had just said.
- MS suggested we ask the current meeting for their initial opinions, subject to the website then going back to the P&I for further development. A few positive comments were made.

Action: JA arrange a meeting of the P&I Committee

- TA said we all know that DC is the webmaster, and the website needs an overhaul. However, with all DC's jobs it's a hellish demand on his time. The BCA's IT work needs to be shared out. We can't be delaying these things waiting endlessly on Committees. Furthermore, RW had asked for constructive criticism on the website to be submitted by 30th November last year; there was a very clear opinion from this that work was needed; DC was meant to feed back on this to this meeting but has not. TA said the CNCC recognised the huge amount of work DC does, however, as with the Try Caving website, which was allowed to go to ruin, he must struggle for time.
- LB felt that this was becoming a personal matter; we should move on.
- GT asked whether the BCA should seek legal advice on a properly worded disclaimer statement for the training document? He suggested that disclaimers may not be worth anything. LW said that BCA Council would be negligent only if we gave advice that we know to be wrong. We are indemnified providing the advice we give is in good faith. HJ confirmed this. LW felt that as this advice document was coming from the expert arm of the BCA, and as we are only following best practice and advice and issuing the guidance in good faith, we cannot be accused of negligence. HJ felt that in the event of any challenge, all we would need to do would be to show due diligence was taken in compiling the advice.

13.1 Media Liaison Officer (Andy Eavis)

No matters arising; JA to liaise with AE over website content.

13.2 Newsletter Editor (David Rose)

No matters arising; RW suggests JA works directly with David Rose.

13.2 Webmaster (David Cooke)

No additional matters.

14. Qualifications Management Working Group (Stephan Natynczuk)

It was reported that Stephan Natynczuk wished to pass the role of convenor to Juliet Parker-Smith the newly appointed QMC Chair. Proposed by CB, seconded NA, unanimous support. AH commented that the Executive and Council should have been notified about the appointment of a new QMC Chair.

15. CRoW Working Group (David Rose)

TA added that AH was also invited to the meeting with the BMC.

16. Vision and Constitution Working Group (Hellie Adams)

No additional matters.

17. Cave Registry Working Group (David Cooke)

No additional matters.

18. IT Working Group and 18.1 Web Services Report (David Cooke)

No additional matters.

19. Safeguarding Officer (Chris Boardman)

No additional matters.

20. British Caving Library (Jenny Potts)

No additional matters.

21. UIS Rep (Andy Eavis)

No additional matters.

22. FSE Rep (Ged Campion)

Agenda item moved to earlier in meeting and appropriately covered.

23. Appointments

Agenda item moved to earlier in meeting and appropriately covered.

24. Online voting (Will Burn)

WB summarised his report and said that he would produce a fully costed proposal for future consideration.

25.1 Scout Caving (Tony Radmall)

TR said the ASCT (Association of Scout Caving Teams) is currently a constituent national body of the BCA; however, there is now a new body recognised by the Scout Association and named National Caving Scout Active Support Unit (NCSASU) and it is wished to replace ASCT with NCSASU. RW said this had been mentioned and approved in principle in 2016. He had researched but so far without success to establish whether it was for this meeting or the AGM to accept this change. It was decided that RW would investigate how to achieve this; there were no objections in principle.

Action: RW to establish the process necessary to replace ASCT with SASU.

25.2 Regional Funding, and 25.2a CNCC Response

These were covered earlier in the meeting.

25.3 CHECC Questionnaire

TA confirmed that this had been provided for information purposes only.

Subsequent meetings

It was agreed that 2019/20 meetings would be as shown on the agenda subject to the April 2020 meeting not falling at Easter.

[Post meeting note: The original date did fall at Easter so the previous Saturday has been substituted]

13th April 2019 (Red Lion, Alveston)
9th June 2019 (AGM, Horton in Ribblesdale Village Hall)
12th October 2019 (venue to be agreed)
11th January 2020 (venue to be agreed)
4th April 2020 (venue to be agreed)
13th June 2020 (AGM, venue to be agreed)

The meeting closed 16:45.