



British Caving Association

Minutes of the National Co-ordinating Panel meeting held on
14th May 2012 at Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford

1. Present

Tom Peacock	(TP)	Chair & ALO South Wales Panel
Lee Paskin	(LP)	ALO Northern Panel
Graham Mollard	(GM)	Derbyshire Panel
Dena Proctor	(DP)	ALO North Wales Panel
Nigel Ball	(NB)	Training Officer
Peter Knight	(PK)	ACI Rep
Mary Wilde	(MW)	Training Administrator

2. Apologies for Absence

Tony Smith	(TS)	ALO Southern Panel
Barry Albutt	(BA)	ALO JSMT

Meeting started at 10:06.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 06/02/2012

Technical Advisors Guidelines Review.

LP said that his comment on this was a question rather than a statement. The minutes should say “ **LP** asked if producing this document was forward thinking in preparation for the demise of AALS and the implementation of a ‘code of practice’ ”.

Should we lower the age at which candidates may enter the training scheme to 16?

LP asked for the minutes to make it clear that he had not yet been able to put this proposal to the Northern Panel.

The minutes were then accepted as a true record of the last meeting.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Long Churn Incident. It had been suggested that a document be created for Long Churn on the same lines as the Manchester Hole Goyden document. **LP** said that the Northern Panel had reservations about producing such a document, which might become prescriptive. **GM** said that the Manchester/Goyden document illustrated potential scenarios but did not set out prescriptive advice. A discussion followed and it was noted that the Long Churn PowerPoint document is now available on the BCA website. **NB** felt that it would be better for the Northern Panel to produce a document rather than risk some other body doing so. **LP** will put these views to the Northern Panel.

4.2 Mini Traction. **GM** read out the information provided by Petzl with regard to using mini traction. A long discussion followed which highlighted the following points.

- Petzl were not stating categorically that they should not be used as belay devices but were covering themselves in the event of an incident.
- Should we ask the BCA lawyer to interpret the Petzl statement?
- Should TAs be training leaders to use them for belaying?

- Their use is safe as long as you are experienced and you do not have any slack in the system.
- Pulley / jammer systems pose the same risks but do not damage the rope sheath and a fall situation.
- NW Panel teach leaders not to use them.
- Are all panels giving the same advice? If not a leader might train in one area but fail assessment in another if they chose to use a mini traction belay.

Finally the meeting agreed the following statement.

“Use of mini tractions requires very careful training and reference should be made to the Petzl documentation. On assessment candidates must demonstrate correct use of all equipment”.

5. Training Committee report

No formal report but the NCP wished to discuss compulsory BCA membership. There were concerns that this might be detrimental to the schemes and could result in people leaving the schemes altogether. **GM** explained that Council had made the decision and it will be implemented. Training Committee has been tasked with establishing out how it will be implemented. Consideration will be given to cost, collection of fees and administration. The overall effect on the scheme will be a factor in all these considerations.

6. Technical Advisors Guidelines Review

This item was deferred until the end of the meeting, and subsequently deferred until the next meeting. **LP** has some input and will send it to **DP**.

7. Should the L1/L2 syllabus be split into 2 categories? Technical Skills and Leadership /Coaching Skills (NB)

NB explained the background to this item. He said that the aim was to re invigorate involvement of recreational cavers with the BCA by offering them a portfolio of training modules to cover skills such as geology, rescue and SRT but not leadership and coaching skills. Some content would mirror the LCMLA syllabus, which is why the question about splitting the syllabus had been posed. **NB** was tasked by the Training Committee to draw up a proposal. Questions were raised about cost and whether or not there would be any take up. There were also questions about whether this would or could or should eventually be linked to the LCMLA scheme. **NB** stated that these modules would be BCA approved and attendees would receive a certificate of attendance, but initially they would stand alone from the scheme and would not involve assessment.

The meeting was in favour of this initiative in principal.

8. Should the TA Workshop application form be simplified?

LP proposed that the TA workshop application form be simplified. Everyone at the meeting was in favour and **MW** will remove the following sections from the form: -

CIC Registration Number

CIC Certificate Number

Expiry Date of Current certificate/Revalidation Period.

Brief Resume of last three years experience.

The final section (which asked which topics you would like to be included) will remain but will also ask if TAs have anything to contribute to the workshop.

The meeting then had a long discussion about TA workshops in general. The key points included: -

- Lack of incentive to run workshops as there is no payment
- Lack of incentive by a panel to run one if no panel member was due to attend.
- Workshops are generally seen as beneficial and an enriching experience in retrospect.
- Attending one out of area can be very useful as a way of sharing experience and working towards standardisation.
- Should we have them at all – instead TAs could observe a training course in another area
- Workshops are only useful if the feedback process is followed.

Overall the meeting was in favour of continuing to run and attend TA workshops. However it was felt that reverting to three year attendance rather than having an anniversary date would be more acceptable and **MW** added that this would be easier to administer. This was agreed. This means that someone who attended in 2012 would need to attend another before the end of 2015.

The three years runs from the year of attendance even if a workshop is attended early. For instance, if someone was due in 2013 but attended in 2012, his or her next due date would be before the end of 2015.

Finally there was a discussion on when each panel should run a workshop. In the past this has been done on a rota basis. There was a proposal for each panel to run a workshop every two years. This would have the effect of encouraging TAs to attend a workshop in a different region every other three-year period. A vote was taken and passed by 4 votes to one and one abstention.

The rota will be as follows: -

2012 Northern England and South Wales.

2013 Derbyshire, North Wales and Southern England.

2014 Northern England, South Wales and JSMT

9. Regional Transfers (NB)

NB felt that Regional Transfers (Additional Region) may not be 'assessed' consistently. The handbook was consulted (see handbook 3.4.3.6 and 4.3.5). This clarified the process but it was noted that where practical assessment takes place this also revalidates an award. No-one was aware of a case where this had happened. **MW** said this would need to be clearly indicated on the S4B by ticking both the additional region and revalidation boxes.

10. NCP Rep at Training Committee (LP)

LP expressed a personal view that if the chairman of NCP was unable to attend the Training Committee, a deputy should attend. He also felt this should not be the Training Officer.

GM said that the Training Officer was the official NCP chairman but that had historically requested someone to chair it on his behalf. Therefore the Training Officer would normally be the TC representative anyway. Furthermore the NCP rep was only empowered to report the minutes and views of the NCP so sending a deputy was not necessary.

There was then a long discussion where each side of the argument was reiterated several times. Finally **LP** accepted that he was unable to change anyone else's view on the issue.

11. Issuing S4Bs Electronically (LP)

LP suggested that electronic S4B's should not be sent to candidates. His reason was that it is possible to edit both WORD and PDF documents if you have the right software. He felt that this was a security issue and might allow someone to alter or forge an S4B. There has been an instance of a certificate being forged including a signature.

MW said that S4Bs and certificates could be forged but that this could be achieved by copying a paper document and that sending forms electronically did not greatly increase the likelihood of this happening. She also said that it was not possible to entirely remove the risk of forgery. Although the meeting noted **LPs** concerns and accepted that forgery by editing electronic files was possible, the likelihood was low and the risk was impossible to eliminate. It was agreed to continue with the current process whereby candidates MAY be sent a PDF file or hard copy but NOT a word file.

12. New TA's

Iain Rennie was ratified as a full member of the Northern Panel (in addition to Derbyshire)

13. Steve Banks Mines exemption

NB said that Steve Banks had requested exemption from LCMLA mines training and fulfilled the required criteria set out in the handbook. **NB** proposed that this be granted and **GM** seconded it. This was agreed by the meeting with the proviso suggested by **DP** that **NB** should not be the assessor as he had acted as referee for **SB's** request.

14. Hot topics from Trainer/Assessor Workshops

14.1 Items missed from last meeting raised by Dena Proctor.

How to ensure standardisation.

- Syllabus could be clearer and more detail in checklist.
- Could create a scheme booklet
- Should consider some form of moderation.
- All panels should pool their notes and back up documents

Is the assessment experience the same for all candidates?

- Consider setting different written papers per candidate to avoid collusion.

Teaching leadership. How can you do it better?

GPS useful but candidates **must** be able to use traditional methods.

Access and access law – complex topic, need the BCA to take a lead.

Revalidation – need to review prerequisite experience (see later agenda item)

Traverse rescues. The NW panel has written up their preferred way of doing these.

14.2 New Hot Topics

- Mini tractions.
- Creation of a module booklet for aid standardisation. A kind of national curriculum.
- Traverse rescues.
- Coaching methodology.

NB and **TP** will put together a list of hot topics for circulation to ALOs.

15. Regional Panel reports

15.1 GM Derbyshire – no report as panel meeting takes place next week.

15.2 DP North Wales

- Des Marshall is not going to pursue his request to join the panel.
- Dave Carlisle (**DC**) and Steve Pope have carried out some mines inspections. We have a problem with sites that are not considered by **DC** to be suitable for LCMLA use, as he will not inspect such sites.
- Forest Commission Access is being progressed. There are issues but progress is being made on a site-by-site basis.
- N Wales do not do “site specifics”. Single site needs must be met through LCMLA.

15.3 TP South Wales.

- There is now an agreed route for Ogof Draenen and a copy should be sent with each new certificate that lists this site. **MW** to set this up.
- Should TAs observe a revalidation workshop before gaining full TA status? **LP** added that is informal and unpaid but that it should appear as a ‘tick box’ on the observations sheet.
- The question of access for training purposes to OFD and Draenon was discussed. **NB** suggested a drip feed approach by asking for CIC access only at first.
- Would the proposed Technical Advisor Guidelines be binding? **GM** explained that they would not be binding and were purely guidelines.
- The panel was not in favour of a BCA LCMLA training evaluation form and felt that evaluation should be between candidate and leader. They were also concerned about increasing any administration burden. This led to a discussion at the NCP about evaluation and moderation but no actions were taken.
- A “Long Churn” type document is being created for PYO.
- Blaenau Quarry Pot is to be gated.
- There has been further desecration of Eglwys Faen
- Sites selected for group days should reflect that hardest cave on a candidate’s proposed site list.
- Do probationary TAs have to attend a TA workshop? **LP** pointed out that this was a requirement on the observations tick list. **MW** noted that the wording on the form could be clearer and will review it.

- The panel felt that the refusal of an extension for Gary Evans to revalidate his CIC certificate was unreasonable. **NB** pointed out that this was not area panel, NCP panel or CIC panel business. It was a Training Officer decision.

15.4 LP Northern England Panel.

- A candidate had been allowed to revalidate after and expired award. **NB** accepted that this was an error
- **NB** attended Dave Galivan's flooding course.
- Applications have been made by Mel Suden, Kate Dufas to join the Northern Panel.
- Duncan Morrison raised concerns about prerequisite experience for revalidations (See later agenda item) the panel were against lowering the age of entry to the LCMLA scheme.
- Should Mongo Gill be described as a cave or a mine? **GM** said that the mine section was very small. A discussion followed and **LP** will ask next panel meeting to decide its categorisation. (If it is described as a mine the JSMT leaders will not be able to use it as they are only awarded cave leader certificates). Mongo Gill can only appear on JSMT certificates at present.

15.5 PK ACI nothing to report.

16. AOB

16.1 Prerequisites For Revalidation. NB

NB invited a discussion on the prerequisites for revalidation. Various concerns have been raised and some people struggle to fulfil the requirements. For instance, most of the work carried out is at level 1 and level 2 leaders may not be offered enough work to complete the require number of trips. There was discussion about use of discretion versus prescriptive minimum requirements. It was noted that if there was a shortfall of experience the candidate's site list could be 'shaved'.

After a long and circular discussion the following statement was suggested.

"If a candidate has personal current vertical experience but lacks L2 group work then the former will be taken into consideration."

DP said that in some instances personal trips were lacking. While she felt that leaders should be active personal cavers she does not want to lose them for the scheme. A further discussion took place and finally the following statement was made which will go to ALOs to consider.

"A cross section of current experience should be shown. If the balance is in question then the Training Officer's advice should be sought."

16.1 Notification of Dates (MW)

MW said she is currently often notified of revalidation via panel minutes but sometimes these are issued very late. Meeting protocol states that only meeting attendees may be given actions. As she is rarely present at panel meetings, she requested that someone at each panel meeting be given a specific action to notify her of dates. She also requested that all notifications should make it very clear whether these were new or altered dates. It is important to have all details in a timely manner and that posting workshops with any detail, as 'TBA' does not encourage applications.

16.2 Site Lists (MW)

LP suggested that JSMT should have a separate site list. There was a discussion as to whether this would or should differ from the Northern England list. It was noted that some sites (e.g. Mongo Gill) are used by the JSMT only. MW said that she would continue to question S4Bs where sites are listed that do not appear on master lists.

16.3 LCMLA Revalidation Paperwork MW

Currently candidates send copies of their experience records and an application form for LCMLA workshops. Sometimes this involves a lot of photocopying and there are instances of 'lost in the post'. CIC candidates only have to submit a form and present their log book at the workshop. MW proposed that the LCMLA application form be reviewed to ensure it prompts candidates for relevant experience information, and to remove the need to send copies of log book records. This was thought to be a good idea and MW will revamp the form and send to all ALOs for approval before implementing the new process.

17. Dates of next meetings

Mon 1st Oct 2012

Feb 4th 2013

Mon 29th April 2013

Meeting closed at 16:30.

NCP Action Register

No	Action	By	Deadline	Done
	04/10/2010			
043	MW to check that all lists of local mining terms have been received and collate. Update 14/05/2012 MW to send the collated list to ALOs for feedback.	MW	ASAP	
044	DB to check if there are any safety implications were Dave Carlisle's reports 'pirated'. Update 06/02/2012 JC said everyone was encouraged to purchase original mines reports. All leaders are responsible for reporting potential problems in specific mines to Dena Proctor and failing to do so represents a safety issue. TP questioned if it was possible to identify an original. DB agreed to check with PICA and Dave Simpson about the feedback process. JC is to write a short note for ALOs highlighting the issues, to be circulated by MW. Update 14/05/2012 no progress	DB JC MW	By next meeting	
	03/10/2011			
052	MW will send updated copies of the L2	MW	ASAP	

	core skills checklists to TP for checking. Update 14/05/2012 The list was reviewed and MW to issue via a TA change notice.			
055	NB to send a copy of the CIC mines module to SP Update 14/05/2012 not yet done	NB	ASAP	
057	TP is to find out who is placing the bolts in The Black Hole Update 14/05/2012 ongoing	TP	ASAP	
	14/05/2012			
069	LP to reflect the NCP views on the proposed Long Churn document to the N Panel.	LP	Next meeting	
070	LP to send Technical Guidelines input to DP	LP	ASAP	
071	MW to revamp the TA Workshop application form.	MW	ASAP	
072	NB and TP will put together a list of hot topics for circulation to ALOs.	NB/TP	ASAP	
073	MW to review the wording on the TA observations form	MW	ASAP	
074	LP to get the N Panel to consider whether Mongo Gill is a cave or mine.	LP	Next Meeting	
075	MW to revamp the LCMLA application form for ALO approval	MW	ASAP	