

British Caving Association
Training Committee Meeting 28th Sept. 2006
10.00 a.m. - Stafford County Council Sports and Social Club

MINUTES

NOTE:- These minutes remain as a draft until approved or corrected by the next meeting.

Present:-

Idris Williams	BCA Training Officer
Graham Mollard	NCP Chair
Nigel Ball	CIC Panel Chair
Jenny Potts	DCA
Tom Redfern	ACI
John Cliffe	Co-Opted.
Tom Scarr	OIC Rippon Joint Services

1. Apologies for absence. Steve Holding, Nigel Atkins (Jenny Potts attending in his place), Allan Butcher, Richard Hill, Steve Tomalin, T.O welcomed Tom Scarr to the meeting as a representative from the Military Cave Leader training scheme.

2. Minutes of meeting 8th April 2006.
Taken as a true record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes.

Joint service award. G.M. Stated that Tom Scarr had taken over as OIC at Rippon, and had only been in post since yesterday, GM was to arrange to call on Tom shortly to fully brief him. The courses at Ripon would be run by Barry Allbut as well as Chips Rafferty. G.M. asked for authority for Barry Allbut to join NCP. This was agreed. In response from a query from T.R. G.M. explained that the Joint Services Training covered all the requirements of Level 1 & Level 2 Training so that provided candidates registered before 30 days after the course it was accepted. However, since Chips was the only Trainer/Assessor in both schemes, any LCMLA assessments by Military personnel could not be done under both schemes concurrently. T.S. stated that one of the priorities he would be looking at would be staff development and that this could play a role in the progress of his staff, together with working with members of the Combined Services Caving Club.

Insurance for trainer assessors. T.O. reported that he had spoken to DJ &NW at Hidden Earth -no progress.

G.M. Brought up the case of an LCMLA Trainer/Assessor who had resigned from the Northern Panel due to the refusal of his Insurers to cover specifically this work, although they were continuing to cover all other aspects of Professional Caving. T.O. promised to bring this to the attention of BCA Council at the next meeting.

Recreational caver syllabus. T.O. regretted to say that he had made very little progress with this but thinks that the LMCLA check list provides a good starting point by providing headings. J.C. offered to help in expanding these headings into accompanying notes.

Publications. T.O has discussed with Dave Baines the use of the information from the Des Marshall edited project which he had now received back from P.R. D.B. was not happy with this but wishes to write his own publication which BCA might

then publish. Dave Elliot does not appear to be making a lot of progress with his update to "Single Rope Techniques"

Ireland Rep & North. TO has "emailed" via SUI website asking for discussions on working together on Local Cave Leader schemes, but he had received no reply.

4. NCP Report Back.

a). Gorge walking.

G.M. reported that this had been discussed at Training Committee about two years ago when some members felt that this was a "cavers thing" particularly in limestone areas. Other members thought that mountaineering should take the lead particularly in non-limestone areas. Although there was some indication that BMC were considering this, it had been agreed that a joint approach would be appropriate. G.M. had requested NCP members to get discussion on this matter at Area Panels. The general conclusion from those panels which had discussed it, was that they were not convinced that it was really necessary, however, if BMC were to introduce something then this should be a joint exercise. G.M. had contacted Steve Longton from BMC who was in the process of taking over an executive role. The feeling within BMC was that they were interested at MIC or MIA level. In order to get things moving before Steve Longton came to an NCP meeting Dena Proctor offered to draw up a draft. This had been completed about two weeks ago but had not been circulated. G.M. expressed a fear that if we don't get involved at this stage BMC will proceed and BCA will be left out of it.

T.R. stated that Steve Longton had told him recently that they had no plans to introduce anything in this field. They did, however, look at combined rock and water activities as part of the MIA, this excluded deep or fast water. It had been generally accepted, HSE AALA etc., that cavers had the skills required for horizontal or down hill gorges but upward scrambling was the province of climbers. The Committee agreed that G.M. would meet with Steve Longton to discuss the way forward, whether that be a combined scheme or no scheme.

b). Revalidation changes.

J.C. reported that he had attempted to draw up a flow chart to illustrate the routes to revalidation under the current scheme and had found it too complicated to show. T.O. agreed that this was the case and reported that often he had queries from candidates whose award was now out of date but had done further training in the past, which should have revalidated them. He found the only solution was to instruct them to go back to the Trainer/Assessor and get a backdated revalidation done. T.O. stated that he would wager that there was not a single Trainer/Assessor who understood the variations involved in this matter.

T.O. tabled a document on the introduction of the new scheme, which he had spent some time on because he foresaw some difficulties in the transition between the two schemes. This is reproduced below.

LCMLA Revalidations on a five year basis.

1. Introduction date. T.O. proposed that this be introduced from Jan. 2008 there being insufficient time before Jan 2007 to inform Award Holders, organise the necessary workshops and amend the Handbook.

2. Award Holders due for SR in 2007. These to continue as before.

3. Award Holders due for LDR in 2007. If these revalidate by workshop they be given 5 years from the expiry of the award. If they revalidate by the myriad other routes this be 3 years from the expiry of the award. (Note if these are overdue candidates they be treated in accordance with existing procedure)

4. Award Holders due for SR in 2008. These should attend a Workshop and get 5 years from the date of the Award.
5. Award Holders due for LDR in 2008. These should attend a Workshop and get 5 years from the date of the Award.
6. Award Holders due for SR in 2009. These should attend a Workshop and get 5 years from the date of the Award.
7. Award Holders due for LDR in 2009. These should attend a Workshop and get 5 years from the date of the Award.
8. Award Holders due for SR in 2010. These should attend a Workshop and get 5 years from the date of the Award.
9. Award Holders due for LDR in 2010. These should attend a Workshop and get 5 years from the date of the Award.
10. Award Holders who are out of date by less than 3 Years. In 2007 existing arrangements apply. From Jan 2008 on they must attend a Workshop and will receive an Award for 5 years dated from the expiry of the previous.
11. Award Holders who are more than 3 Years out of date. These should attend an individual reassessment covering the whole of the syllabus. From 2007 this will be dated for 5 years from the date of the assessment.
12. From 2008 when a candidate achieves Level 2 from Level 1. It is essential that the T/As realise that they are also revalidating the Level 1 sites at the same time.
13. From 2007. All new Awards will be for 5 years from the date of the assessment.

All the above transitional arrangements were agreed.

Other routes to revalidation. It was agreed that the issue of a Level 2 Award would be an automatic revalidation/resetting of clock for the existing Level 1 Award and that assessment modules 2 or 3 of the CIC, provided the CIC Trainer/Assessor were also an LCMLA Trainer/Assessor and consultation would have to take place with T/As from other regions and with a mines assessors if relevant.

Area Panels must organise themselves to arrange Revalidation workshops on a regular basis from late 2007. This is essential for Award Holders who are now given no alternative routes except workshops to revalidate.

NCP must produce wording for all the clauses, which need to be changed in the Handbook, not just the candidate's section.

Action:- G.M. to arrange the Handbook amendments.

c). Handbook amendments. G.M. Stated that all proposed amendments to the handbook had been agreed in principle except for the removal of the description of emergency in the Level 1 ropework section, as these techniques should be used when appropriate. Training Committee agreed this change.

T.R. Brought up the subject of assistant leaders. He felt that the way the Handbook was written was that there was an expectation that an assistant was present. T.O. pointed out that the whole idea of the SRT module was so that there was no need for an assistant. G.M. agreed to review the wording to remove this expectation. This subject lead into discussions about the timing of the next edition. T.O. reported that existing stocks were low and that he had instructed TASP to arrange a reprint in sufficient numbers to last until March 2007, the only changes would be in the contact details.

Action:- G.M. to review and draft these amendments in detail before the December meeting 2006.

d). Trainer assessor status.

T/A workshops. G. M. outlined the background to this in that NCP had recommended and Training Committee agreed that the frequency of compulsory attendance at these could be reduced from 2 years to three. T.O. stated that, with the introduction of a Three-year Cycle in place of the two-year cycle there should be no need for Workshops in 2007. Those T/As previously due to attend in 2007 can wait until 2008. T/As due to attend in 2006 still have chance to attend one in November. Those missing that would have the opportunity to regain their status by attending one in N.Wales in Feb. The Workshop scheduled for Sept. in the South should be delayed until early 2008 or possibly late Nov/Dec. 2007 in which case it could be counted as attendance in 2008. Training Committee agreed this approach.

CIC prequalification. T.O. suggested that as Training Committee was anxious to make direct entry into CIC Scheme as simple as possible, might CIC panel consider a pre-entry skill's assessment for candidates who did not have Level 2 with SRT Leader. After some discussion it became apparent that very few recreational cavers entered into CIC training. The subject led into a discussion on the format of the Awards which some felt had an over emphasis on skills and neglected leadership and instruction skills. No conclusions were reached but this is a subject for ongoing debate.

Mines Assessors. G.M. stated that there was a shortage in some areas of suitable Mines Assessors whilst there were people who could be utilized more. T.O. asked that Area Panels should look into their mines assessment provision, this being particularly important for Northern Panel.

New Trainer Assessor. G.M. requested that Chris Jackson be approved as a Trainer Assessor in advance of a recommendation from NCP. This was agreed subject to NCP recommendation in due course.

T/A.s removed. T.O. reported that Rory Gregory has now presented his logbook and been reinstated. Jon Beavan has resigned after being removed. Steve Tomalin removed as T/A but currently remains as ALO F.O.D. Dave Carlisle has left as a T/A but remains as Mines Inspector. This leaves Northern Panel with a problem of no Mines Assessors.

He has asked TASP to update the contacts list. T/As above removed, Dave Carlisle shown as Mines Inspector. Due to current regional inconsistencies each T/A to be shown as being a Cave or Mine and Level 1 or 2 Assessor as appropriate

Mines Inspectors. T.O. reported that he had discussed insurance implications with DJ & NW and there are none. Subject to discussion with DC he proposes to include Neil Rushton, as he could be asked to do work in Snailbeach.

Forest of Dean Panel. A discussion took place regarding this Panel, which it was thought had not met. However, J. C. arrived as this was being discussed and was able to inform the committee that the panel had met recently. The subject was dropped.

Trainer Assessor Agreement. T.O. tabled the existing agreement used for 2006. The committee agreed this with amendment to the frequency of T/A workshops as above, a rewording of the insurance clause and the replacement with a CIC T/A clause more in keeping with the CIC Handbook.

5. CIC Panel report back.

a). New Trainer Assessors

Nigel Atkins and Richard Hill. Appointed and have commenced apprenticeship. There were 7 applications in time, plus one late with an incomplete submission. The scoring system threw up 2 excellent candidates 2 poor candidates 2 very poor candidates and one ruled out on minimum time of holding a CIC. The appointment panel was only able to recommend 2. T.O. reported that he had received an appeal from one of the unsuccessful candidates. He dealt with this by re-scoring the top 4 applications but found himself in general agreement with the scores and disallowed the appeal. He had not heard since from this appellant.

b). Log book pages.

T. O. Stated that during the appeal above he found it very difficult to go through candidates logbooks due to bad writing and unclear details regarding what was being done on the trip. He asked if CIC Panel could look into producing an electronic form whereby the candidate could type in details? Also to allow the inclusion of greater details. For example a CIC might act as a Leader on an activity centre trip, doing the same as an LCMLA holder yet might also be on the same trip as an advisor to the centre under Site Specific or might be on a caver technical training trip. T.O. also asked if CIC Panel could revisit the submission requirements for prospective CIC T/As - one application ran to 103 pages of A4 and a lot of what was being asked for seemed unnecessary.

c). Local Cave Leaders progressing to CIC.

The situation whereby LCMLA Holders with Mines Module gained a CIC without doing the Mines Module was discussed. It was agreed that these could receive a CIC Award for Caves and for leading in the same mines which their LCMLA Award authorised

6. Hidden Earth 2006 review.

T.O. Reported that N.A did a SRT session for about three people and GM took 5 on a beginner's trip in Carlswark. He felt uptake would have been much higher if better advertising had been possible. Transport had proved a problem as the events were so far away from the main site. For next year at Upton on Severn caving trips would be impossible as the distance was too great.

7. Student Seminar.

Loss of SRT kit. T.O. reported that he had heard that now Huddersfield claim to have a complete SRT kit "acquired" from BCA at the seminar last year. It was being promised that this would be returned this year. Replacements delayed until it is clear what has been lost. In the meantime last years grant has still not been paid.

2006 Seminar. This is on Mendip this year. We have agreed to fund two CICs for two days direct, in order to avoid the complications encountered last year. He suggested we allow £500 for this and CHECC have already approached Andy Sparrow, he had confirmed this with him. AS was thinking of getting Chris Binding who is apparently going through CIC assessment. Training Committee agreed that it had to be a fully qualified CIC although there was no objection to a prospective CIC helping out. Training Committee also agreed to grant £100 towards venue costs.

8. Training Grants 2006.

T.O. reported no change in situation from the last meeting. He intended to pay Nigel Atkins £125 for Hidden Earth. Training Committee agreed. It seems we are going to be somewhat under spent again. T.O. pleaded for regional reps to try to drum up applications.

9. Any other business.

Eco hang placing. J.P raised this matter and stated that the location of any bolts placed had to be agreed by the appropriate Regional Council, who would be responsible for maintenance and testing. There had been problems in getting training for placing and testing in the past. This had been solved and a testing machine was available The discussion rambled on until T.O. curtailed it, as it was really a matter for Equipment Committee.

BCA Youth and Development Campaign. J.P reported that this was launched at Hidden Earth, unfortunately communication previously had been very poor. It is currently heavily biased to University Students and trying to open up clubs to welcome them and generally support them and there was also a "Try Caving" leaflet and website. T.O reported that it is his intention to suggest to BCA Council that this should include under 18's. Many clubs have moved away from junior membership of recent years due to perceived legal and child protection complications. He will ask that legal produce a simple set of guidelines for clubs to help them overcome these perceived problems. T.R. pointed out that the "Try Caving" website was focussed solely on joining clubs, however, as there were many outdoor centres offering caving courses and guided caving he felt that an opportunity was being missed to promote this aspect.

T.O. tabled the following proposal which he hoped to present to the next BCA Council meeting.

Proposals for Youth and Development Campaign UNDER 18s

The proposals outlined at Hidden Earth deal only with University Students and over 18s generally.

Training Committee believes that it is essential to make arrangements for encouraging under 18s to become involved in caving as early as possible.

This can be achieved as follows:-

A. Caving Clubs have fought shy of allowing under 18s to take part due to perceived legal, insurance and child protection complications. BCA via it's Legal and Insurance section is requested to produce consistent, researched and simple advice/guidance to all BCA member clubs on the implications of having junior members of any age and the encouragement of young people generally.

B. A considerable amount of introduction to caving is already done by voluntary youth groups, in particular, The Scout Association, although others may be active.

There is concern among some about the quality/safety of some of this work, although much is exemplary. For voluntary workers there are enormous implications in time and cost in obtaining NGB qualifications. These being over and above training commitments in their own voluntary organisation and training and assessment in other activities.

These are:-

LCMLA Registration:-	Cost:-	£40 to BCA
LCMLA Level 1 Training. Time:- 2 Days	Cost:-	£80 to Trainer
Level 1 Assessment. Time:- 2 Days	Cost:-	£250 to Assessor
LCMLA Level 2 Training. Time:- 2 Days	Cost:-	£100 to Trainer
Level 2 Assessment. Time:- 2 Days	Cost:-	£250 to Assessor

Obviously BCA can do nothing to reduce the time factor, however, if this work were to be encouraged financially the results could be.

1. An improvement in the numbers of the young people coming from the voluntary youth sector into mainstream recreational caving.
2. An improvement in the quality of the introduction of the young people's safety and experience. (We all hear from time to time bad reports about the conduct of these groups).
3. A vast improvement in the image of BCA amongst the voluntary youth sector where, currently BCA is seen as at best disinterested, at worst actively putting obstacles in the way of people engaged in this work.
4. A strengthening of the LCMLA & CIC schemes with more people being involved.
5. An introduction into the ranks of Award Holders of more persons who are not "in it for the vast sums of money to be made" and a general improvement in the relationship between the professional caver and the recreational caver.
6. A small increase in members to Caving Clubs and the formation of more Voluntary Youth Sector Caving Clubs affiliating to BCA.

The proposal is, therefore, that the BCA Council approve the following measures to encourage voluntary youth groups to have BCA qualified leaders and instructors.

For candidates who can prove an adult membership of a voluntary youth movement and membership of a BCA affiliated caving club that:-

1. The LCMLA registration fee is waived.
2. Each time a candidate achieves an Award at Level 1 or 2 BCA gives a grant to this individual of £50.

To safeguard this from abuse, the Award Certificate is endorsed with the words "Valid only in the Voluntary Youth Sector". If the candidate were to leave the voluntary sector and enter the commercial or education sector this restriction could be removed by a refund on a sliding scale reducing to zero over 5 years.

Affect on BCA Finances. There are currently around 200 registrations per year, although there is no information on the numbers of these who are in the voluntary sector. A reasonable guess would be 10% and that these numbers would double if this scheme was introduced.

A reasonable estimate of the cost to BCA would be £4200 per year (this assumes that only half the participants go on to Level 2).

There are of course many unknowns in this calculation and it would be necessary to monitor the commitment very closely and make the budgetary arrangements sufficiently flexible.

In the event of the LCMLA & CIC schemes having to become self-supporting due to the loss of Sport Council Grants the effect of this scheme will have to be taken into account.

T.O. added to the above that the time and cost implications would be in addition to the training requirements of the voluntary youth organisation and other NGB qualifications such as SPA, BCU, Mountain Leader and so on. He also suggested

that this could result in an improvement in the image of BCA in that BCA would be then seen to be putting something in to helping the voluntary sector. The idea of sponsoring courses for the voluntary sector was mooted, however, it was felt that this could lead to possible low numbers on courses and would not allow for the mixing and idea sharing across sectors. Training Committee agreed that this proposal should be supported and that T.O. to report this to BCA Council.

Resignations. T.O. stated that Pat Ramsden had stated that she would not be prepared to continue in her position after the end of her current contract:- 31st March 2007. He would be reporting this matter to BCA Council at the next meeting and asking that a replacement be found.

Additionally he stated that he would be stepping down at the next BCA AGM and would also be reporting this.

Work at Height. T.R. asked for responses to be made to HSE on the new Regs. T.O. asked him to send details of what was required and he would do it.

10. Dates of next meetings.
December 16th agreed.
21st April agreed
September 27th (Thurs) agreed