



**Draft Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 24th March 2012
at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch**

Present:

Paul Ibberson (PI)	BCA Treasurer
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Nick Williams (NW)	BCA Insurance Manager / Equipment & Techniques Officer
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer / Webmaster
Glenn Jones (GJ)	BCA Membership Administrator
Jenny Potts (JP)	BCA Publication Sales / DCA Rep.
David Cooke (DC)	BCA Cave-Registry Co-ordinator / IT Working Group Convenor
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Member Rep.
Owen Clarke (OC)	Club Member Rep.
Mick Day (MD)	Individual Member Rep. / President
Faye Litherland (FL)	Individual Member Rep.
Mike McCombe (MM)	Cambrian CC Rep.
David Jean (DJ)	DCUC Rep.
Mark Williams (MW)	CSCC Rep.
Idris Williams (IW)	ASCT Rep.
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Rep.
Alan Finch (AF)	WPCST Rep.
Chris Gibbs (CG)	Observer

The meeting commenced at 10:32am.

1. Chairman's Welcome

As AE was unwell, MD took the Chair and welcomed Council members. MD sent his best wishes to AE on behalf of the meeting. As GJ needed to leave early, MD suggested we postpone discussing the Manual of Operations until after lunch and bring the Equipment & Techniques and Membership Administrator's Reports earlier in the Agenda.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Clark Friend, Nigel Ball, Stephan Natynczuk, Mike Clayton, Emma Porter, Bob Mehew, Elsie Little, Ged Campion, Dave Checkley, Andy Eavis, Helen Brook and Bernie Woodley.

3. Applications for Club Membership

There are no applications from new member clubs in this period.

4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 7th January 2012 (previously circulated)

CJ: There was no Media-Liaison Report (so it was not accepted unanimously!)

PI: Under "Chairman's welcome" it should say "AE", rather than "EA".

Proposal: *to accept the amended Minutes from 7th January 2012 as a true record*

Prop: JP, Sec: FL *agreed unanimously*

5. Matters Arising for the Minutes of the last Council Meeting

Review of Action Log

Action Log 6 (*Bank Mandates*): Ongoing - see Treasurer's Report.

Action Log 36 (*Manual of Operations*): Ongoing – see Secretary's Report.

Action Log 54 (*Liaise with SUI*): Ongoing. NW is waiting for an opportunity to arrange a face-to-face meeting.

Action Log 79 (*BCA Approved-Provider Logo*): Complete

Action Log 83 (*Produce Asset Register*): Ongoing

Action Log 84 (*Speleology Funding*): Ongoing

Action Log 86 (*Ways to Back up Media-Liaison Role*): See Media-Liaison Report

Action Log 88 (*Update Working Parties section of Manual of Operations*): Complete – see Secretary's Report

Action Log 89 (*MoO: Standing Committee Voting*): Complete – see Secretary's Report

Action Log 90 (*MoO: Complaints & Disciplinary Policies*): Complete – see Secretary's Report

Action Log 91 (*Advertise AGM*): Complete – see Secretary's Report

Action Log 92 (*Publication of Long Churn Document*): Complete – see Acting Training Officer's Report

Action Log 93 (*in May GJ to send letter to non-joiners*): Ongoing

Action Log 94 (*EECC grant application*): Complete

Action Log 95 (*Student Member Discount*): see Membership Administrator's Report

Action Log 96 (*Publish list of Member Clubs on website*): Complete

Officers' Reports

6. Chairman's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

The Chairman's Report was accepted without discussion.

7. Secretary's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

Letter from CSCC

LW: As it has been explained by DW, there is no issue. However LW feels it was initially presented differently from the way DW describes it. The only remaining concern is that there remains the potential for any of the Special Committees to co-opt anybody and dilute the vote of the RCCs. An attempt to change this at Council has failed.

GM: We have bent over backwards to try to encourage RCCs to attend meetings.

LW: There had been an issue with CSCC e-mails, but this has been resolved. Does not feel that DW needs to write to CSCC, as most of the issues in the letter were resolved satisfactorily at the last Training Committee Meeting.

(OC and CG arrived at this point)

Precedent?

JP: Could it be that the Centre is invoicing for the facilities?

PI: No. PI had always thought the money was going to the Trainer/Assessor (T/A), but in fact it seems it is not sometimes. PI feels this is out of order.

JP: Agreed.

GM: Normally in the past T/As working for a Centre did their T/A work in their own time. It has always been the case that the T/A agreement and contract is with individuals rather than Centres. This is to ensure a level playing field for all T/As particularly with local-authority funded centres who sometimes subsidise courses.

LW: Contracts are difficult. We might feel that T/As should be paid directly, but really it is for the TC to discuss the implementation of this.

PI: Would suggest we adopt the principle that payments for T/As should go directly to T/As.

FL: Doesn't see why we need to discuss this. Surely the issue is between the Centre and the employee.

GM: Doesn't see that a Centre should make a profit that should go to the T/A.

NW: There is a danger here that we may be causing T/As to be in breach of their contracts of employment by enforcing such a principle.

IW: The other issue may be insurance, in that their insurance may be provided through the Centre.

GM: BCA has a contract with the T/As themselves as providers. That is the important contract and those are the people we should be paying.

NW: There is a professional precedent for this. If working as a Consultant, NW would expect to be engaged as a person. The difficulty then is that it may place individuals in conflict with their contract of employment. The insurance point is very important. A Centre would correctly argue that their insurance only covers them when they are working for the Centre. This is an issue for us as an Organisation. It may mean that we can't necessarily create a policy that is as inclusive as we may wish. It is between the employer and the employee to decide if they can run courses in their own time. Do we currently request sight of insurance from people?

GM: No. We recommend that they should have insurance.

NW: There is a school of thought that we ought to be requesting sight of insurance certificates.

IW: Thinks we do ask for them to confirm that they have it.

GM: We removed that requirement because we felt it was their responsibility.

NW: The insurance angle needs further consideration. We definitely need to make clear that it is an expectation that T/As work for us as individuals.

Action 97: NB to liaise with NW and Training Committee with a view to implementing Council's wish that T/As work for BCA as individuals.

MM: On a more general basis, would like to know in what situations is it reasonable to pay a BCA member? When do we do it and what safeguards do we have in place?

NW: This is specifically dealt with in the Constitution. It does not allow any members of Committees to be paid for anything other than out-of-pocket expenses. There is a specific bar on people voting on Committees if they are paid for any work relating to that Committee. This nearly happened in Training Committee, but we switched to paying expenses.

The remainder of the Secretary's Report was moved until after the Membership Administrator's Report.

8. Treasurer's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

2011 Accounts

PI: The final version of the 2011 Accounts will be completed shortly. If anyone knows of anything still unpaid or unresolved in 2011, please let PI know urgently. Currently there is a surplus showing for 2011. In light of the increase in the insurance premium, PI intends to allocate the majority of this to the sinking fund.

2012 Budget

PI: Feels reasonably confident of the figures for income in 2012. Noted that in 2011 there was a relatively low expenditure on Speleology and anticipated this would rise in 2012.

NW: Does the Speleology figure include the £5k allocated by Council for the new Commissioning Editor? The cost in 2012 is unlikely to be that high, but it may well be in subsequent years.

PI: No. This will need to be amended.

FL: Thinks the E&T figure will need to be increased given that we need to buy 2,000 anchors.

LW: The Outdoor Show has been discontinued and this has traditionally been funded from the Youth & Development budget.

PI: Has budgeted for grant applications from groups such as EECC to come out of the Y&D budget in the future.

PI: The meetings and conferences cost in 2011 includes the trailer and fittings for the artificial cave.

LW: We need to consider introducing a heading for 2016 expenditure. Initially there will be travel expenditure. If LW is involved, his travel claims will not necessarily be trivial, as he lives a long way from the Dales. We will need a reasonably transparent accounting procedure from the outset to ensure BCA can track whether it got all its money back.

PI: RCC expenditure is likely to rise in 2012 as there will probably be a retrospective CSCC claim.

DC: We will need to review the amount we give to the Library at some point. We did originally intend a review and this hasn't yet happened.

JP: The original Business Plan was to run until 2013 and the Library Steering Group need to review this soon. Certain things have altered since the original one.

DJu: The biggest library in Europe is under construction in Birmingham. We should probably ensure they are aware of the BCL's existence.

CJ: The Library is the third most expensive heading in BCA's budget, yet it had only 17 visitors in 2011. That makes it the most expensive thing we do. Surely we need to review it.

JP: That is one of the reasons we are publicising it.

GJ: The important function of the Library is really as a depository for archive material. The value doesn't lie in the number of visitors, but in the fact that we are storing it in a safe manner.

PI: Sooner or later PI will need to write a cheque for the Library for 2012. Are we happy to run with it in its current form for 2012 and review for 2013? It is worth noting that of all the items of expenditure, it is the Expedition Programme and the Library that are the two areas we have real control over.

DC: This is why we normally agree the budget in October of the previous year.

GM: Why is the Mines Inspection heading in there?

DC: There was a period where the Mines Inspection insurance was paid through us, but this is no longer the case.

GM: This is happening again.

NW: That is actually a slightly different scenario and can be accounted for under the Training Committee heading, so the line can now be removed.

LW: Notes that our annual surplus is projected to reduce substantially between 2009 and 2012 due to the increase in the insurance policy. Is this trend likely to continue in the longer term?

PI: Probably not. The idea of the budget document presented is that we can regularly compare progress.

DC: As we have substantial reserves, there is no real issue with running at a loss for a year.

The remainder of the Treasurer's Report was accepted without discussion.

9. Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

NW: Is requesting that Council consider whether or not to accept NW's resignation. NW knows that GJ would agree that they have different perspectives on the events surrounding this. NW was requested by Council to arbitrate, and that necessarily involved making decisions.

GJ: Would like to suggest a way forward here. From DCA and CNCC's perspective, the assumption last October was that CSCC had accepted the IPTD in full. Suggests that CSCC simply accept the IPTD in its entirety at this meeting, including the requirement for SRT competency, and we then run with this for 2 years without discussing the document again in the meantime.

NW: Has concerns about this with his insurance hat on. The Policy as it stands is not being followed by some Regions at the moment, even by some of those that have agreed it. About the worst thing you can do is lay out a gold standard and then accept that you are not going to meet it. That is then very difficult.

FL: There is an incredibly simple way through this. The work on the IPTD by Bob, Les and Glenn is excellent. As Nick said, it is a gold standard, a guide for best practice. However underground there is going to be compromise from time to time. We can adopt it as a guide for best practice, then we empower the Regions to take the document and apply it to local conditions. Doesn't believe there is any argument that, if placing bolts for SRT, you should be competent at SRT and SRT rigging to decide on placements. However, in non-SRT situations, then this is not necessarily relevant.

GJ: The requirement for SRT competence is to protect the installer.

LW: Has always been puzzled that, regardless of what a document says, whoever is underground at the time is going to do things the way they want to. The document should say that you should use safe techniques, rather than specifying SRT.

NW: There are situations where, for example, bolts are being placed for fixed aids. NW doesn't believe the situation is quite as straightforward as some seem to think.

MM: Given the variety and nature of Welsh caves, we tend to find the notion of a one-size-fits-all approach a little alien. The general idea that one specific approach is mandatory therefore seems absurd.

DW: AE has asked DW to pass on that he has always made clear that everyone's absolute motives in all of this should be to make British Caving safer. He notes that the teamwork that resulted from the need to find a replacement to the Peco Anchor was an excellent example of what can be achieved if everyone works as a team. On the subject of SRT competency there are obviously clear and sensible compromises that could be reached if only all sides were willing to work together. AE also adds that for Council to accept the resignation of the E&T Convenor today would be absurd. NW is probably the highest qualified engineer in British Caving, holds a vast amount of respect from all quarters and has faced an incredibly difficult job winding his way between the various factions over the last years. AE would like to see us supporting NW today.

FL: Fully supports NW in his role as E&T Convenor. CSCC is happy to work with any Convenor on the E&T Committee.

GJ: The issue is not about NW's qualifications, knowledge or experience, but rather that NW did not make clear his decision on SRT competency to all parties.

NW: Does not feel he has actually yet reached a conclusion on the matter, but instead has now listened to both sides.

At this point NW left the meeting to allow it to discuss his resignation without him being there.

DJ: DCUC support NW continuing in his role.

LW: Does not see how Council can accept NW's resignation. Who do we replace him with?

GJ: Is not disagreeing with any of this. The problem is that NW conducted negotiations with CSCC and CNCC /DCA independently. He asked AE to be present to ensure fair play and then agreed different things with each group. On that basis copyright was handed over and the nub of the issue is that CNCC / DCA feel they have been deceived.

MD: Is it possible to step back and consider the document again?

LW: Was not at the meeting, but thought that CSCC's stance on the document was that CSCC accepted it on the same terms as Cambrian had.

MM: It was accepted by Cambrian with some modifications.

- GJ: But these modifications had nothing to do with SRT competence.
- DC: Has an e-mail from MM saying that Cambrian were able to accept the IPTD subject to a number of reservations. The first of these was that “although the document doesn’t specifically say so, [Cambrian CC] assume it is to be applied to the installation of anchors in thickly-bedded, sound limestone only and where the pitch is intended to be rigged for SRT from the top. We have a number of potential sites in Wales where we do not believe the procedure is intended to be used: Rock other than limestone (e.g. slate mines); Pitches that are rigged from the bottom; and Ladder pitches.”
- GJ: Has an e-mail from Cambrian saying they accept it.
- MM: Perhaps Cambrian took too benign a view, but we accepted it subject to an applicability statement based on the concerns DC has outlined.
- FL: The agreement we had with NW was that we accepted the IPTD on the same basis as Cambrian.
- GJ: Has an e-mail from NW in October stating:
The statement which was agreed [at the E&T meeting on 8th October] was as follows: "As a result of the process of arbitration, CSCC have agreed to the IPTD including a requirement for SRT competence, on the basis that the document will become copyright of BCA and subject to future revision as agreed by the E+T Committee". In order for this to be put into effect we will need a written transfer of copyright from Bob and Les to BCA.
 It clearly states that CSCC have agreed to the document including SRT competency. This is about deception, rather than NW’s role as convenor.
- MD: Even if we change the role of Convenor, we still have an issue that needs resolving. It, therefore, seems that we need everyone who has been involved until now still involved.
- MM: Access Bodies in Wales are continuing to bolt caves in different ways. There is no universal method used.
- JP: This document has been discussed by DCA on a number of occasions over the years. DCA is solidly behind the requirements of the IPTD. Bob Dearman believed the document had been accepted in its entirety. The only analogy JP can come up with that reflects the events is that it is like a school pupil saying he agrees to something while keeping his fingers crossed behind his back. The IPTD contains the section “It is recommended that at least two cavers highly experienced in rigging techniques discuss the following points before drilling the anchor holes”. The document then goes on to list 8 different points to discuss. This allows for site-specific discussions. There are anchors being installed by DCA that are being used for ladder & lifeline, SRT, traverse lines etc.
- GM: One thing here seems worrying. Some people do not seem to understand that modern rigging for ladder and lifeline is the same as for SRT. There are times when handlines and assisted handlines are appropriate rigged in a different way, but ladder & lifeline should follow the same approach as a well-rigged SRT pitch.
- SH: Is conscious that whoever the Convenor is, we still need to realise that there is an issue to be resolved.
- JP: Bob Dearman has stated categorically that if NW remains as Convenor, he will resign.
- GJ: CNCC are fed up of the debate that has gone on for 4 years. 4 out of 5 Regions have agreed the IPTD, as has the 2010 AGM. If NW’s resignation is not accepted today DCA and CNCC will simply continue to install anchors according to the IPTD, but will not waste their time attending E&T meetings.
- DW: There are potentially very serious long-term effects of the decision we are being asked to make today. Before we do it is important that we reflect carefully on these, and not simply get bogged down in the smaller issues such as whether we think SRT competence should be a requirement, or indeed whether or not NW did deceive anyone.
- MD: Do CNCC feel that there will be an opportunity for future co-operation on E&T matters?
- GJ: CNCC developed this Programme in the late 80s and early 90s. It was a CNCC scheme and we intend to continue running this Scheme.
- LW: E&T deals with more than resin anchors. Are you intending to withdraw from everything?
- GJ: Doesn’t know until the next meeting in June.
- LW: There is no single standard being applied across the UK. People are still choosing to follow their own procedures anyway. The likely situation following today is that there will be two separate Schemes. This wouldn’t be the end of the world. There are anchors going in all over the country that aren’t resin anchors.
- SH: Throughout mines in many parts of the country, it has to be desirable to go down the resin anchor route. There will, for example, almost certainly be a pile of bolts going in at Nenthead this Easter, but there is nothing in place for us to do this following a national standard. SH doesn’t know how to get out of the situation we find ourselves in today. The important function of a Convenor is not necessarily technical knowledge, but rather their ability to act as a good Chairman.
- MD: Would the return of copyright to Les & Bob be an acceptable solution?
- GJ: No. The problem is that NW deceived us. GJ has a huge amount of respect for NW and this made NW’s admission last week all the more difficult for GJ.

- OC: One thing that worries OC is that we need a national standard when talking to a coroner. NW has had a very difficult job. One thing we can be certain of is that NW has now learnt from the experience and has to be a better Convenor as a result.
- DC: It comes back to the issue of communication.
- GM: Is it really necessary for a BCA document to be agreed by all Regions?
- LW: When the document was accepted by the BCA AGM CSCC had withdrawn from the process.
- GJ: At the Council Meeting on 20th June 2009 NW stated that "Competence of the Installer is an integral part of the safety of the Scheme and of the Insurance cover for the Scheme. The removal of the word SRT would not be appropriate."

Proposal: *That Council does not accept NW's resignation as Convenor of the E&T Committee.*

Prop: FL Sec: LW agreed - votes for: 11, votes against: 2 plus 3 abstentions

[NW returned to the meeting]

- LW: Has E&T been doing anything else?
- NW: We achieved a lot at the meeting last Saturday. It was very helpful and NW is now clear that we have the equipment, experience and expertise to move on. Other than the one issue brought to today's meeting, NW feels the E&T Committee is now in a better position than it has been previously.

Rope-Test Report

- LW: Is GM concerned about BM's work in light of what he said earlier?
- GM: No. Ladder & lifeline techniques should follow best practice in SRT rigging, but handlines need not.

The remainder of the Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report was accepted without discussion.

14. Membership Administrator's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

Admin Decision

- GJ: We require at least 4 members for a properly-constituted club.
- LW: Surely then anyone with less is not a club.
- GJ: There are a number of clubs with less than 4 members. They began life with 4 or more and gradually this has dwindled.
- JP: Are there insurance implications to us accepting a club as a member if it does not fit our requirements for being a club?
- NW: No.
- JP: Logically we can then have 1 person declare themselves as a club.
- NW: Yes, but this would end up costing them more than being an individual member.

Action 98: GJ to amend Group Membership forms to show the minimum membership rate as applying to "up to 10". DW to amend Handbook and website.

Donation to BCA

- DW: Is pleased to report that BCA has received a donation of £130 from the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club. This comes from the proceeds of the 2011 NAMHO Conference.

BCA Logo Use

- GJ: There has been some correspondence between AE and an Associate Member about their use of our logo on their website.
- NW: Feels we need to be clearer in our policy on it.
- DW: The Constitution does clearly state that the logo cannot be used by anyone except Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies without our express permission.
- NW: That's alright then. We need to be very clear about our rules if we are entering into agreements with people and organisations in the future.

Membership Categories

- NW: After some thought NW feels that we could simplify our membership structure for the end user by simply having a "Full Rate" or a "Discount Rate" membership. The "discount" category would then include students, under 18s etc.
- PI: At the last meeting PI, NW and GJ were charged with working out how to implement the principle of extending the student discount to DIM membership. This proposal will be brought to the Council Meeting following the AGM in June for introduction on 1st Jan 2013.
- NW: If we agree to full and discount membership, we can then hopefully simplify things here too.

Secretary's Report (cont'd)

Manual of Operations

Section 1.7 Committee Membership & Voting Procedures

- FL: Felt that the previous meeting had agreed to a status quo, rather than automatically giving everyone a vote. Where there is a vote that only applies to RCCs, then maybe the vote should be restricted. The new proposals take power away from the Chairs of the Standing Committees.
- DW: Should a vote only be relevant to certain parts of a meeting, would then expect the Chair to direct the others to abstain.
- NW: It could be a general principle, rather than prescriptive guidance. We need to remember that explicit rules can come back and bite you at some point in the future. Generally prefers principles to requirements.
- DW: We could turn it into general principles, but fears this will create further arguments in Committees over difficult issues.
- LW: Principles are definitely better than absolutes. It does include the word "normally" in the proposals.
- GM: Disagrees. If you are not prescriptive there will be more room for interpretation and, therefore, argument.
- JP: Does not feel there is any danger of Committee voting being rigged in the future because we have now included the clause that Council must be informed of any co-options.
- GM: Would like to see something in there specifying that co-opted members could be co-opted for a specific time period to, for example, complete a specific job.
- JP: We could always add "for a specific period of time".
- LW: No need to specify this. It is obviously an option.
- FL: Is still concerned that if co-opted members have a vote, then there may be an occasion when a vote only affects a Region.
- NW: In such a situation, an Appeal can always be lodged with Council, which is undoubtedly the best body to rule on such matters.
- JP: There could equally be a situation where the only people who should have a vote are co-opted.
- DC: A lot of this can be resolved by good Chairmanship.
- FL: Doesn't have any serious objections.
- LW: At the end of the day a good Chair will expect people to abstain. If people are unhappy, the matter can be brought to Council for the ultimate decision.

Sections 5.2 (Complaints Process) and 5.6 (Disciplinary Policies)

- DW: Has received some useful comments from Emma Porter suggesting some minor amendments:
- 1. I agree [...] that ideally appeals should be heard by individuals not previously involved with the issue. [...] In BCA's situation, there are sufficient persons involved in the organisation to ensure that individuals not previously involved could hear the appeal. [...]*
 - 2. We need to ensure that we are satisfied that we are not binding BCA to too onerous a complaints procedure e.g. I would not specify the number of persons involved in any particular stage e.g. "will normally consist of 4 other people" so that we are not in breach of it for any reason. I know we have used the phrase "normally consist of", but what is normal?*
 - 3. Employees have their own disciplinary procedure but what if the disciplinary matter in question does not relate directly to their work but as an individual - what procedure should be followed? As an employee, they have express and implied obligations, so it may be worth broadening what has been written to read: "In respect of employees of BCA, it should be noted that where the disciplinary matter relates to an employee's work or where the BCA may be brought into disrepute by the actions of the employee, then the matter will be handled in accordance with current employment legislation and their contract of employment".*
- DW: Feels Emma's suggestions are very sensible and is, therefore, proposing the draft document tabled with these changes incorporated into it.
- SH: Regarding the number of people involved in the Appeal, it is important that everyone accepts the decision of the Appeals Panel. To some extent the larger this Panel can practically be, the better. It will carry more weight.
- FL: Suggests that we accept the proposals and send them to the AGM for ratification.

Access Bodies

- MM: There are in fact a number of non-fee-paying Access Bodies.
- DC: These are called Funded Access Bodies (FABs).

Section 6 – General Meetings

LW: The more we can move from the Constitution to the MoO, the better.

Annual General Meeting Arrangements

Proposal: *That AE be appointed Chair and DW Recorder for the AGM in June.*

Prop: LW Sec: FL *agreed unanimously*

The remainder of the Secretary's Report was accepted without discussion.

10. Conservation & Access Officer's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

JP: Dave Webb, DCA's Conservation Officer, reported to the DCA AGM that he hears nothing from BCA's C&A Officer and that there has been no meeting of the Conservation & Access Committee since 2009. The AGM asked it to be minuted that "DCA expresses its concern at the lack of liaison between BCA and the Regions in respect of Conservation and Access".

DJ: Notes that the C&A section of the BCA website has also not been updated since 2008.

The remainder of the Conservation & Access Officer's Report was accepted without discussion.

11. Acting Training Officer's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

Long-Churn Document

DW: This has now been published as a free download from the BCA website. There have been a few difficulties with people being able to view the document, as it needs certain software to be installed. However a pdf version has now also been added, which will hopefully get around the problem.

AALS

GM: HSE saw the removal of licensing as a way to save lots of money. They put out a consultative document in March last year. There was then an initial meeting in September and there have been a further 4 meetings since then. Two people were appointed to represent every adventurous activity at these meetings. The people selected were John Cousins from MLTUK and Head of Training at the RYA, Amanda van Santen. From the outset it was obvious that HSE was paying lip-service to the Governing Bodies. They had already decided they were removing licensing. They wanted to put in place a voluntary code of practice. They said adventurous activities aren't dangerous but that, of course, is because a licencing system was already in place. It is now progressing more slowly than had been planned. It is clear, though, that England will now almost certainly deregulate. Wales also met very recently, didn't consult with any Governing Bodies and decided to keep licensing. Scotland has met and postponed a decision. The confusion continues. If we have a split decision, then a mobile operator working in Wales will have to have a licence.

NW: This will probably also be challenged under EU Competition Law.

LW: Should we be lobbying as the National Body, or should we just wait for another serious incident. Everyone knows that voluntary regulation doesn't work.

GM: Quite simply people are going to have to die first.

MD: We will make very little difference acting individually. The Sport & Recreation Alliance will pursue the matter.

NW: A formal letter is probably a good idea so we can at least say at a later that that we did state our case.

Action 99: DW to liaise with NB and GM and then write to the Secretary of State stating our concerns about the demise of AALS.

Recreational Training Grants

MM: Would like to propose that funding for recreational Training Events be delegated to the Regions. This would then be treated in the same way as we currently deal with Conservation & Access money.

IW: What about other bodies such as CHECC and Scouts?

BP: Can't understand what is wrong with the current system? The money's there and all you have to do is apply.

SH: Doesn't think there's any need to change the system. We just need to advertise that the money is available. Because there hasn't been a history of people applying for grants, people don't. We need to encourage them.

LW: If RCCs were given a budget to spend on training as they see fit, that would encourage training. Even if there aren't really hoops, people perceive that there are. CSCC has run training events and will be running one at the Cavers' Fair this year. Anything that gives training a higher profile is great.

BP: Why can't the current system simply continue?

DW: Anything that encourages training events has to be a good idea. There is no reason why this idea should be instead

of the current Training Grants, but rather come in addition to them. Any event that involves cavers from lots of clubs is much more use overall than an event with people from the same club.

PI: This was originally brought to the Finance Committee, but PI advised it was a matter for either Training Committee or Council. Recently spending on Recreational Training Grants has been nearer £1k than £2k per year. However this year the spend looks like being higher.

DJu: Perhaps the P&I Officer should spread the news about Training Grants.

MM: Cambrian still get money from the Sports Council annually and they struggle to spend it every year. At the end of 2011 Cambrian wanted to organise an event for this year, but the funding was in doubt for 2012. Because of this they went to the TC for money and got it. This was much appreciated but it led Cambrian to question the need to apply to TC when C&A money is handled differently.

PI: Surely the TC is the best place to decide on where money should be spent.

LW: We spend £10k on the Library and £5k on expeditions. Surely we should be spending more than £2k on training.

CIC Handbook

DW: Has received some useful suggestions from Emma Porter: 1) *I couldn't see any mention of the use of the BCA logo or any cross-reference to a logo policy* 2) *Is there anything in the Handbook that puts the onus on the CIC member/candidate to report relevant criminal offences that could undermine their professional standing (particularly when dealing with under 18/vulnerable persons) or allegations or complaints made against them so putting the Training Officer on notice. I know there is the complaints procedure but that outlines what happens when a complaint is actually received.* 3) *Another point that I am not sure is mentioned is obligations under the Data Protection Act i.e. if BCA has collected information that it is passing to the CIC member, for example names, address and phone numbers from the Outdoor Show.*

DW: Is also concerned that some of the content on Appeals etc will almost certainly conflict with our new Complaints & Disciplinary Policies if, as seems likely, they are agreed at AGM. Thinks the solution is to replace anything that might conflict with a statement referring the reader to BCA's policies. NB is aware of this.

LW: How is it intended that the CIC Handbook be published?

GM: On a CD together with other useful documents, such as the Weather document, and also as a download from the website.

LW: Is it worth waiting for the Radon booklet so it can also be included on the CD?

GM: We really need an update to the CIC Handbook. The one currently being sent out is hugely out of date. A wait of a few weeks is probably worth it though.

Proposal: that the CIC Handbook be amended to reflect Emma Porter's concerns and to include reference to BCA's Complaints and Disciplinary Policies and that it then be published after consultation with DW, NB and LW. If the Radon booklet is published in time, this shall also be included.

Prop: DW Sec: FL agreed unanimously

Action 100: DW to update Handbook to reflect Emma's concerns and to include references to BCA's Complaints and Disciplinary Policies and then publish after consulting NB and LW.

The remainder of the Training Officer's Report was accepted without discussion.

12. Publications & Information Report

Radon Booklet

LW: The Radon Booklet isn't quite ready for Council approval at the moment. LW is half way through proof-reading it. Is Council happy to approve it by e-mail and speed up publication?

DC: Who is going to finish the proof reading, as LW is going to Mulu shortly?

Action 101: LW to pass Radon Booklet to DW for proof-reading and subsequent circulation to Council by e-mail. If there is no dissent, then it can be immediately published. If not, it should be returned to the next Council meeting.

Speleology

NW: The post of UK-based Commissioning Editor for Speleology has had 4 applicants. One of these has since been withdrawn. NW is now in more detailed discussions with all three candidates.

a. Webmaster's Report

LW: The IT group will look at the website.

b. Web Services Report (written report circulated)

c. Newsletter Editor's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

LW: We need a new newsletter editor.

DW: Is this a good opportunity to reconsider the role of the Newsletter Editor and whether it might be better termed something else in the era of modern technology?

d. Handbook Editor's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

The Publications & Information Reports were accepted without discussion.

13. Legal & Insurance Report

DJu: Nothing to report.

a. Insurance Manager's Report

NW: There seems to be an anomaly with professional cavers using caves where access has been negotiated for recreational cavers. NW is not sure our landowner insurance covers them unless they are BCA members. Our brokers' recommendation is to ensure that all members of the training schemes are BCA members. How much we choose to ask them to pay for this is entirely up to us.

MD: Has experience with OFD that people have been excluded because they are at work underground, rather than a lack of insurance.

NW: Yes, but there is a separate concern that our access agreements do not cover people caving under our Schemes.

NW: As a principle we should, therefore, ensure our Award Holders are members. There is also a concern that many Award Holders already hold their own liability insurance but are required to take our insurance too if they join BCA.

GM: Anyone who is a T/A has insurance in place and will object to paying again for this to join BCA. We need to take into account how much it is costing them to get their qualification in the first place as well as being registered.

SH: Does this mean that an Access Body needs to ensure people caving through its access arrangements are BCA members?

JP: Some landowners insist that people accessing a cave are members, some don't.

NW: Is not clear that we know the answer to this.

Proposal: *Council requires that all BCA Award Holders become BCA Members.*

Prop: NW Sec: OC *agreed unanimously*

Action 102: NB, NW, PI and GJ to liaise to find a way to implement Council's wish that all BCA Award Holders need to be BCA members.

The remainder of the Insurance Manager's Report was accepted without discussion.

Other Reports

15. Youth & Development

Cliffhanger

BP: Would like confirmation that BCA is willing to support this event again this year. This year there seems to be a surplus of artificial caves available for use: as well as DCA's and BCA's, DCA have also been offered the YHA one, however this has been turned down on the grounds of cost. There will also be a mobile cave in a van at the event. This is a commercial enterprise. We have now also been offered the HangFast cave.

DW: Given our agreement with EntrePrises, we can't really accept this.

GM: How much room is there in the BCA trailer for extra cave?

NW: There is space for at least half as much, and maybe the same amount, again.

LW: Is in consultation with James Collings on the SYWTGC and TryCaving leaflets.

JP: Has about 400-500 copies of the TryCaving leaflet and about 50 copies of SYWTGC leaflet remaining. Mary Wilde always sends out a copy of the Try Caving one with registrations.

16. Radon Working Party Convenor's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

The Radon Working Party Convenor's Report was accepted without discussion.

17. Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report (*written report circulated*)

The Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report was accepted without discussion.

18. IT Working Party

DW: Has not yet submitted his Data Protection survey response. Apologies.

19. International Representative's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

FSE Report *(written report previously circulated)*

DW: Thinks it is appropriate to set up a Working Party to co-ordinate 2016, thus ensuring we have regular reports to Council and it is a standing item on the Council Meeting Agenda.

LW: Certain principles need considering, such as whether or not BCA is underwriting the event.

Action 103: LW to bring a formal proposal for a 2016 Working Party to the next meeting.

LW: Would like to see FSE co-ordinating events in Europe so we don't have two major events happening on the same weekend. GC should push for this.

The remainder of the International Representatives' Reports were accepted without discussion.

20. Media-Liaison Officer's Report

CJ: When CJ's phone number went on the BCA website several years ago, it became clear that a lot of people look at the website for someone to phone and then ring CJ. Should we have a BCA number with automated answerphone? CJ feels this will also deal with the issue of backing up his role in his absence.

NW: At the moment we use real people at NW's offices in Great Hucklow. They field all calls and give the caller the appropriate number.

CJ: Would it not make sense to have something automated for a 24-hour service?

NW: This would be extremely expensive and people tend to prefer a human being anyway.

CJ: The Contacts Page on the BCA website only has CJ's phone number on it. This means a lot of calls come to him.

DW: We can easily reorganise the contacts page on the website to field enquiries. *(Post-Meeting note: this has been done).*

21. British Caving Library Report *(written report previously circulated)*

JP: A leaflet has been distributed to advertise the Library to the Yorkshire Geological Society. We are going to use it for other things too. We also intend to bring the Library to the attention of the Peak Park Board plus Natural England. It would also be good to involve local schools.

22. Any Other Business

1) **Energy4Sport:** CCPR as was is now the Sport & Recreational Alliance. MD thought their latest initiative might be a suitable subject for a newsletter article. If it does what it says, it could produce quite a lot of income.

2) **FL:** Has been contacted by Dave Hallam of Sports Financial Services, who is now in a position to offer life and critical-illness cover on normal terms to anyone involved in Cave Rescue. This is costing FL about 10% of what she had been paying previously.

23. Date, Time & Place of next meeting

The next Council Meeting will be on Saturday, 9th June 2012 at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch immediately following on from the AGM.

The meeting closed at 16:10

Action Log – March 2012

No.	Action by ...	Details of Action
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6	PI	Update Bank Mandates.
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36	DW	Put together a Manual of Operations
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54	NW & DJu	Liaise with SUI with a view to helping them streamline their insurance situation.
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October 2011

83	PI	Produce an Asset Register and liaise with NW/EP over the total replacement value of our insured equipment.
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84	AE, PI and DW	Consider David Gibson's proposals on the funding of Speleology.
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January 2012

93	GJ	In May send a letter to 80 random people who have not rejoined in 2012 asking for their reasons.
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95	GJ, NW and PI	Work out the details of implementing a student-member discount.
March 2012		
97	NB	Liaise with NW and Training Committee with a view to implementing Council's wish that T/As work for BCA as individuals.
98	GJ / DW	Amend Group Membership forms to show the minimum membership rate as applying to "up to 10". DW to amend Handbook and website.
99	DW	Liaise with NB and GM and then write to the Secretary of State stating our concerns about the demise of AALS.
100	DW	Update Handbook to reflect Emma's concerns and to include references to BCA's Complaints and Disciplinary Policies and then publish after consulting NB and LW.
101	LW / DW	LW to pass Radon Booklet to DW for proof-reading and subsequent circulation to Council by e-mail. If there is no dissent, then it can be immediately published. If not, it should be returned to the next Council meeting.
102	NB, NW, PI and GJ	Liaise to find a way to implement Council's wish that all BCA Award Holders need to be BCA members.
103	LW	Bring a formal proposal for a 2016 Working Party to the next meeting.



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Council Meeting, 24th March 2012

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Item 6: Chairman's Report

First of all I should like to thank Mick Day very sincerely for chairing the last meeting. It looks so much as though you didn't miss me that I feel compelled to miss further meetings in the future. Sorry Mick!

Although I don't agree with Council getting overly involved with Sub-Committees and I think 99% of the time, they should work out their differences within the Sub-Committee, there is a situation within Equipment & Techniques which will have to come to this meeting. I only wish cavers could be more reasonable people and it all reminds me why I packed in British Caving politics 30 years ago.

My experience over the last couple of years has been people generally working together to progress speleology in a host of ways including with the public, with the media, with the landowners and also making it safer across all regions. Members of Council should not forget this and if they disagree with this, please let's have a debate.

Finally, seeing as I've been abroad much of the time since the last meeting and unfortunately was taken ill at the last BCRA meeting on Sunday and, as yet, have not fully recovered, I don't have a lot more to add.

It will come up in Ged's European Report that we have "won" the right to host the 2016 European Congress. This is not a full-blown UIS Congress; it is a Europe-only congress. We should resist temptations to make it too scientific and too world-wide. It is EUROPEAN and should not try to compete with the full-blown UIS Congress in Brno in 2013.

Andy Eavis, March 2012

Item 7: Secretary's Report

1) Draft Manual of Operations: I have acted on Council's advice from January's meeting and redrafted the Complaints & Disciplinary Policies. The Disciplinary Policy is now substantially longer, but hopefully is a better policy as a result.

The other "difficult" item from January was the issue of voting in the Standing Committees. I have taken the view that the clear majority of Council wish to go for the principle that the democratic Parent Body is Council and a principle of one-person-one-vote should apply in Standing Committees with all co-opted people having the same status as RCC and Constituent Body Reps. I have also added that any new co-options should be reported to Council by the Committee Chairman, and that any casting vote by the Chair will usually be in favour of maintaining the status quo.

The section on Annual, Special and Emergency General Meetings has been finished. I do not envisage any major issues with this (but I may be wrong!)

Finally I have made some small amendments to the other areas suggested in January. The majority of these are minor typographical issues and I have decided to save some trees, and Council Members' sanity, by only reprinting the more important or these, and then separate from the rest of the policy to which it belongs. I trust this is acceptable. An up-to-date version of everything is available online at tinyurl.com/bcamoo.

I am now seeking Council's endorsement of these Policies with a view to putting them, along with the other sections we have agreed so far to the AGM in June. The remainder of the document can then be developed over the next year and endorsed by the 2013 AGM. By that point, of course, we will probably be revisiting and updating what we have done this year, but I guess that's life!

2) Where next?: Apart from a more developed section on Working Parties, this pretty much brings to an end the sections that I can complete. The next major stages are: Finances; Procedures for individual Standing Committees; Procedures for individual Working Parties; Head-Office Procedures; Membership Processes; and Training Administrator's Processes. There are also other smaller sections on: Artificial Cave; Copyright; Data Protection; Employees; Publishing a Document; Web Services; and Website. Thus my work in 2012-13 will unfortunately involve cajoling other Council Members into completing their sections. I will, obviously, be available to assist in this process and have already had some useful discussions with several people on this.

3) Annual General Meeting: Cards giving members the necessary advance notification of the AGM were posted out in mid-January. The deadline for agenda items and nominations for Chairman, Training Officer, 2 Individual Reps and 2 Club Reps is 24th March, the day of our meeting. Following this I will be posting out an Agenda to members, to arrive in good time for the constitutional deadline of 28th April. I propose that, rather than sending everyone a copy of the draft Manual of Operations, I will simply refer them to an online copy, in the same way as we have traditionally done with the Reports document. Is Council happy with this?

4) Letter from CSCC: I have received a letter from CSCC (see Appendix 1) expressing concern that Council have allowed the Constitution to be breached in accepting the Training Committee's proposals for structural change.

I seek Council's guidance on this before I reply, but for my part I am confident we have not allowed any part of our Constitution to be breached. Constitutionally Standing Committees are basically free to regulate their own business with a few small provisos. One of these is that they are open to one rep from each Region and each Constituent Body.

Training Committee has traditionally had two sub-Committees to deal with the running of the LCMLA and the CIC Schemes. These were ultimately answerable to the Training Committee. However the Training Committee had been proposing to in effect disband the sub-Committee that runs the LCMLA Scheme (called the National Co-ordinating Panel) and return this work to the Training Committee. There was absolutely no planned change to the right of the Regions and Constituent Bodies to attend Training Committee or to their right to vote. I should like Council to confirm my understanding of the situation and will then reply accordingly to the CSCC.

5) Any Precedent? Nigel Ball contacted me this week about an issue he is intending to bring up at Training Committee in the coming months, and wanting advice on whether it might be applicable to other parts of BCA. A basic summary is as follows:

LCMLA Trainer/Assessors are authorised as individuals to run revalidation courses. BCA then pays them a fixed fee of £200 for their time, together with up to £50 in expenses. There has been some concern voiced recently about some Centres invoicing BCA on behalf of the T/A who works for them and then passing on to the T/A only a percentage of the fee BCA pays. This is seen by some as very unfair and arguably an inappropriate use of BCA's funds.

Nigel would like Training Committee to have a chance to consider this. Before then, Nigel wants to know if BCA already has a similar situation elsewhere and if, therefore, a precedent has been set one way or the other. I am not aware of any, but we agreed I would bring it to Council on his behalf.

Damian Weare, March 2012

Item 8: Treasurer's Report

The main focus of the last couple of months has been getting the 2011 Accounts knocked into some sort of shape. This has by necessity meant gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the data and information flows – a process which is not quite complete but is now considerably better than it was! A rough cut version of the position for the year will be available for the meeting; this will then need a few further checks before being audited ready for formal presentation to the AGM.

In addition to the 2011 Accounts, I have also been working on a Budget for 2012. This will be available for review at the meeting. My intention is to establish a formal framework around which we administer the finances of the Association for the coming year. This will help with forward planning of cash requirements as well as giving a better view of the position at a point in time. At this stage, I have not produced a cash flow forecast as it seems to be more relevant to the latter part of the year.

On the latter point, day-to-day funding requirements have been comfortably met in the first couple of months of the year. The first priority of the insurance premium payment was initially financed from deposits, but membership income receipts have flowed in well and the deposit balances are being topped up incrementally. (In due course, the issue of deposit balances in one location needs to be looked at in light of the FSCS compensation limits, but at present that is a concern for another day).

The bank mandates are now all in place. Online access still has a couple of creases to be ironed out, but part of the delay in sorting these has been due to unavailability arising from absence for overseas trips; in my view a perfectly acceptable excuse!

There remain some loose ends and items ongoing (formal Finance Committee sign off of 2011 Regional Council funding, asset register etc) which will be addressed as soon as possible, but I think normal operational matters are now fairly well up to date and it will be my intention to keep them that way.

Paul Ibberson, March 2012

Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report

Sorry I can't be with you. Unavoidable family duties and no internet access there.

Victoria Cave: Efforts towards provoking some conservation work there has been abandoned by me until the economic climate of the country might indicate there could be funds available for the task

Fracking: I have still seen no substantial evidence that there is any need for us to become anxious about "fracking" despite lots of reading! A watch is still vital.

Forestry Commission: Negotiations with the Forestry to obtain access to mines and caves within the forestry land (over and above the Forest of Dean) in England have stalled because of the pressures of the reformations in the nature of the EA/FC/EN new body.

However, in Wales it is about to be finalised in a manner that will permit access to recreational explorers more or less unfettered, and to OPC's (*I assume = Outdoor Pursuit Centres, Secretary*) in an appropriate manner, under the banner of CCC.

Maybe we will be able to expand to the rest of the British Isles as necessary.

Devolution: Devolution has caused a vast increase in my work as the main part of the British Isles and Wales now seem determined to diverge!

Wales has determined to keep Adventurous Activities Licencing for providers working in Wales, while England seem determined to turn to voluntary policing. I have concerns that this may result in confusion and possibly abuse of the underground if standards descend to the lowest common denominator without regulation. However, I am sure our Training Officer will also have his eye on the situation.

Similarly the new structures for the Single Environmental Bodies (Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and relevant element of the NCC) will differ. We rely on these bodies considerably for support and for access and work is on-going to ensure we are not overlooked.

Conservation Policy Updates: Updating the Conservation Policy has had to be put on the back burner until I can escape from family duties, hopefully soon....and you've never before seen me crave paperwork and meetings as a better option!

Elsie Little, March 2012

Item 10: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report

Council members will have seen contributions from CNCC and DCA with regard to the fall out from the E+T meeting which took place on Saturday 17th March. These have been highly critical of myself and were this the limit of their criticism then I would generally consider that a dignified silence would be the appropriate response. As it is, they have also included criticism of both Andy Eavis and Damian Weare which are completely unfounded and against which they should not have to defend themselves. If blame there is, it is mine, and mine alone.

There's a long version of this story and a short one. Council does not have time for the long version. The short version is that I was requested to arbitrate by the Council meeting in October and I attempted to do this by negotiation rather than imposition of my view. Ultimately, this proved unacceptable to the CNCC and DCA representatives.

The current situation is that the CNCC representatives to the E+T Committee appear to have resigned (although only Glenn Jones has actually contacted me directly to say this) and the DCA Representative is considering his position. So far as I am aware, all other members of the Committee remain committed and, other than on the topic of the IPTD, useful progress was made on a range of topics at the meeting.

I accept that my performance as Convenor of the Committee was arguably unsatisfactory. On that basis, I offer my resignation as E+T Convenor to Council. I am prepared to continue in the post if Council wishes, but I would point out that Council has more important issues to address than the anchor replacement program and I would rather walk away than allow personality issues to overwhelm the important work which BCA needs to undertake.

Nick Williams, March 2012

a) Rope Test Officer's Report

4 ropes have now been issued as part of Part 2 of the Long-Term Rope Test to look at the impact of lower levels of usage on rope performance. 7 offers for locating fixed hand lines have been received and accepted, subject to confirmation of terms and conditions of inspection.

Bob Mehew, March 2012

Item 11: Acting Training Officer's Report

Apologies for being unable to attend the Council Meeting, but I have taken up an offer I couldn't refuse of a trip to Lechuguilla Cave!

It has been reasonably quiet since the last Council meeting, but there are a number of developments to report:

Training Committee Attendance: It is pleasing to report that several Regions that haven't been involved in the Training Committee for some time were able to attend the last meeting. We also have a new CDG rep. This is excellent news and we are very grateful for their input.

Long Churn Document: This is now nearly complete following Council's suggestions in January and will be published shortly.

SUI Parity: I have reestablished contact with SUI regarding agreeing parity of awards across the borders.

CIC Handbook: The updated version has now been accepted by Training Committee and is now ready for Council's approval prior to publication.

AALS: Following the demise of AALS in England, the Welsh Assembly has decided to continue with the requirement for providers working with children to be licensed, and it looks likely that Scotland will do the same. This could be quite difficult for those instructors who work mainly in England but travel across borders. The whole situation does not appear to have been very well thought through.

Admin Database: I have met with Mary Wilde and completed a draft specification for the new database. In line with the wishes of the October Council Meeting, this will be making its way to Executive once I have returned from Lechuguilla.

Nigel Ball, March 2012

Item 12: Publication & Information Officer's Report

No report received.

Les Williams, March 2012

a) Webmaster's Report

No report received.

Les Williams, March 2012

b) Web Services Report

This has been proceeding as usual. Of particular interest is GPF's new and improved website which will be moved to the BCA server and is due for launch on 1st April.

David Cooke, March 2012

c) Newsletter Editor's Report

There is very little material received for the next newsletter, so there is no issue imminent. I have not had any offers to take over in June as the editor!

Mike Clayton, March 2012

d) Handbook Editor's Report

Work will begin on the 2013 edition very shortly with a view to publication being as soon as possible following the AGM.

Damian Weare, March 2012

Item 13: Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

No report received.

David Judson, March 2012

Item 13a: Insurance Manager's Report

No report received.

Nick Williams, March 2012

Item 14: Youth & Development Officer's Report

No report received.

James Collings, March 2012

Cliffhanger 2012: DCA has been asked by the Cliffhanger Organiser to put on a stand and activities for this year's event. We expected to run the DCA stand/tent, the DCA Artificial Cave and Ladder-climbing; the organiser has arranged for the BCA Enterprise Cave to be there, so DCA members will be manning that as well. Boyd Potts is organising the caving setup on behalf of DCA and Nigel Atkins (DCA's Training Officer and a CIC holder) will be running the Ladder-climbing. We would welcome support from any other cavers who want to get involved and hope to receive financial support from BCA. Contact is Boyd Potts, T. 01335-370629, Em. boyd_p [at] btinternet [dot] com

Jenny Potts, March 2012

Item 15: Membership Administrator's Report

BCA Membership to March 18th 2012

DIMs 332 (caving), 35 (non-caving), 9 (CIM Plus), 7 (BCRA Honorary), 1 (BCA Honorary) (including 167 BCRA members)

CIMs 3384 (caving), 893 (non-caving), 371 (student / U18)

Clubs: 144

Associates: 7

Access Bodies: 7

BCA 2012 renewal process: Following a very manic period between mid December and mid March renewals are, at last, slowing down to a less stressful level, now mostly updates as clubs round up the remaining stragglers and late payers.

New Clubs: No new clubs for this period.

Admin-Decision required: Following a protracted e-mail exchange, where a club attempted to avoid paying the minimum club fee of £20 on the basis that they only had three members and the Group Application Form states "4 to 10" members, I would appreciate the agreement of this meeting to change the category to "up to 10" members.

Glenn Jones, March 2012

Item 16: Radon Working Party Convenor's Report

Yet another period with nothing to report on the enquiries front.

I was going to raise the fact that I have considered to stand down at this AGM. I have done the job for a number of years and of late, particularly since the production of our first book, the number of enquiries has reduced considerably and we have had none in the last six months at least. It will be interesting to see if anybody contacts me before the AGM. We have just got the new edition of the book sorted out and this would be an appropriate place to bow out as there would be a breathing space for someone new to get themselves sorted out. The balance between publicity and hype has always been a fine one and I hope that I have not undersold the profile of BCA in that we have not really pushed this. The sport has a difficult enough problem without scaremongering about radiation.

I appreciate that the job may be viewed as a 'difficult' one, and that getting a willing volunteer could be a problem. If nobody could be persuaded to do the job I would be happy to do another year with the understanding that that would be it.

Clark Friend, March 2012

Item 17: Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report

The CCC Registrar, Brendan Marris, has sent me the updated Cambrian Registry which I will shortly update. It includes an additional 100 sites in North Wales based on the hard work of Cris Ebbs. In addition Cris has created an excellent website with further information at: <http://sites.google.com/site/cavesofnortheastwales>.

David Cooke, March 2012

Item 18: IT Working Party Convenor's Report

I have conducted an e-mail survey of all BCA's Officers for data stores that require backing up and are potentially subject to the Data Protection Act. Thank you to those who have replied. I think I now have a complete set. Regarding the backups, the next step is to collate those replies and follow up individually with the Officers concerned. Regarding the DPA, the survey has identified the areas we need to register and should allow me to complete the first part of the application. I also need to develop and document BCA's DPA measurer and procedures which form the second part of the application.

David Cooke, March 2012

Item 19: International Representative's Report

The main thing that is about to happen in UIS politics is a bureau meeting in Mexico. We were trying to set one up in Iran but, against my advice, it was pursued by cavers who knew Iran very well. The Iranians are very keen, although they have more than one group hosting, and I think a small number of bureau members are coming. The rest, the main group, are coming to Mexico from 24th-30th May flying to Cancún.

The main topic will be Brno Congress, but other things such as over-viewing all the Commissions including Archaeology, Volcanic Caves, Longest, Deepest and Largest etc. It will be a couple of days of meetings which, from experience, are pretty constructive. If anybody on Council has any suggestions of things for me to take forward to this, by all means bring it up at the meeting or e-mail me separately.

Andy Eavis, March 2012

Item 19a: FSE Report

The next FSE bureau meeting will be held in Sloup, Czech Republic on 21st March 2012.

Organisation of Euro Speleo forums 2014-16:

- ES forum 2012 to take place 29th Sept to 1st Oct at the 13th Swiss National Congress of Speleology, Muolathal, Switzerland.
- ES forum 2013 Montpellier (13th anniversary of FFS)
- ES forum 2013, at 21st-28th July at 16th UIS in Brno, Czech Republic
- ES forum 2014/15, call to go out
- European Congress 2016, (provisionally August) in the UK.

Ged Campion, March 2012

Item 20: Media-Liaison Officer's Report

A report which incorporates the past 6 months due to my absence and the absence of a report at the last meeting.

- Provided a quote for BBC regarding the 3 counties connection and gave a short interview on BBC Radio Cumbria on the same topic
- Email from BBC who wanted to follow/go on the Vietnam exped.
- Phone calls from several other media organisations interested in following/filming expeditions. One with a particular scientific angle the other more general (who Andy also spoke too).

In amongst these 'genuine' Media Liaison phone calls there were as usual a number of calls regarding other matters such as LCMLA and CIC reassessments etc...

Item 21: British Caving Library Report

The Library Steering Group's 13th meeting was held on 17th February.

Cataloguing and other work: Work on re-cataloguing the whole Library continues - slower than we would like due to time constraints - but we are getting there. Of particular note is the amount of voluntary work carried on in the Library itself: over 1600 hours in the past two years; and many hours of voluntary work outwith the Library by people working at home on websites, cataloguing, journal exchanges, etc.

Duplicate sales: We made a total of £337 in 2011 from sales of duplicates via Lucky Dip, etc. at Hidden Earth and other events. We know that we shall have some more valuable duplicate items for sale eventually but, for the time being, we are putting these to one side and keeping a check on values.

Exchange Journals: The first tranche of exchange copies of recent BCRA Caves & Karst Science and BCA Speleology have gone out and we are following up leads to other exchanges which have lapsed during the last few years.

Additions to the Library stock & liaison with other caving libraries: In addition to exchange journals, books bought, and UK journals sent to us, we continue to receive donations of material. We always ensure that donors are content that, in the event that items are duplicated, the duplicate material may be sold to increase Library funds. I am liaising with other UK caving libraries to increase holdings by exchanging duplicate material.

Promoting the Library: A leaflet advertising the Library and its services will be handed out at the BCRA science meeting on March 10th. and will also go out to other caver groups in the near future. It is our aim to advertise the Library as widely as possible to generate interest and increase the usage.

The Archives website: A new online section, linked to the Library website, has been developed to make available at least some of the Simpson Archive material and to advertise its existence - this can be accessed direct at <http://archives.bkra.org.uk> or from the Library website.

The 5-year Library Business Plan, 2009-2013: With the help of Dave Gough, the BCRA Treasurer, I have been able to complete the spreadsheet of expenditure on the Library for the years 2009 to 2011 so we are able to compare the figures with the original projections. Our lease on the building has been renewed at the same rate for another two years (until the end of 2013). During the next few months the Steering Group intends to consider the progress of the original plan, drawn up in 2009, which changing circumstances have caused to be amended. We then intend to update the plan for future years and agree the amended Plan with BCA and BCRA Councils.

Jenny Potts, March 2012

Item 21: Any Other Business

a) Energy4Sport

Mick Day has received the following communication from the Sport & Recreation Alliance:

SUBJECT: ENERGY 4 SPORT & RECREATION - SAVING YOU AND YOUR MEMBERS MONEY

I am writing to tell you some very good news about a partnership we have brokered which could save your organisation and its members literally thousands of pounds.

Taking advantage of it could save you your Sport and Recreation Alliance membership subscription fee many times over, so I am delighted to be in a position to announce it formally to you and all our 320 members.

We have teamed up with Utility Aid to deliver what I hope will be huge energy cost savings for sport and recreation. The offer we have negotiated may seem too good to be true, but there is no catch and I am optimistic that for many of you it will lead to immediate savings of thousands of pounds [if not more] ~ and it won't cost you a penny.

The initiative is called Energy 4 Sport & Recreation and it offers FREE energy audits to organisations big or small, which are:

- ☐ facility-owning national governing bodies, organisations or clubs involved in a sport or recreational activity ~ the facility could be your HQ, a regional office, one of your affiliated clubs or anywhere which makes use of utilities
- ☐ businesses that want to save money on their commercial utility bills and raise money for their favourite sport, activity or club in the process
- ☐ individuals looking to switch to a cheaper home utility provider and raise money for their chosen sport, activity or club whilst they're at it.

The process is free and simple. All you need to do is call 0808 1788 170 [a freephone number] and speak to a member of the Utility Aid Team who will tell you how they can help.

They will take you through a free, no obligation energy audit and identify the best tariff and supplier for your needs. The process takes you hardly any time at all and Utility Aid do the hard work for you. Once they have made their recommendation, you can feel free to ignore it or take action and save your organisation or activity money.

You can find out more details by:

- ☐ visiting our new Energy 4 Sport & Recreation website at www.energy4sports.org
- ☐ reading the Frequently Asked Questions sheet enclosed.

You can also contact Libby Jellie: ljellie@sportandrecreation.org.uk to find out how you can promote this great offer to all of your members so that they can benefit from it too.

Yours sincerely

T M LAMB

Chief Executive
Energy 4 Sport & Recreation

FAQs

IN A NUTSHELL, WHAT DOES ENERGY 4 SPORT & RECREATION DO?

Research from the Sport and Recreation Alliance shows that running costs and a lack of time and resources are a big problem for grassroots clubs, organisations and national governing bodies at the moment.

So, in response to this, the Sport and Recreation Alliance and Utility Aid have formed a partnership called Energy 4 Sport & Recreation to provide clear and impartial advice on how to reduce energy costs, in the form of a detailed energy audit.

The audit is provided entirely free of charge by Utility Aid ~ a team of established energy experts who can help you save money on your energy costs as well as on the time needed to make better energy purchasing decisions.

HOW MIGHT FREE ENERGY ADVICE BENEFIT ME?

If you take an energy audit through Utility Aid, they may discover that you can save a significant amount of money through switching energy providers. They may also discover that you are paying the wrong bill amounts or that you could be on a tariff better suited to your needs.

If you decide that you want to make the switch to a different tariff or energy provider, Utility Aid will arrange the whole process for you. In other words ~ you can reap the cost savings without lifting a finger. They are there to help you make the best energy choices.

THIS SOUNDS A BIT TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. ARE THERE ANY CATCHES OR HIDDEN COSTS INVOLVED ?

Quite simply ~ no there aren't...

BUT IF WE DON'T HAVE TO PAY FOR ANYTHING, WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

If you choose to switch to a new energy provider, Utility Aid and the Sport and Recreation Alliance will both receive a small commission directly from your chosen energy supplier ~ not from you. But if it turns out that you are actually already getting a good deal and do not need to switch providers, we will be up front and tell you so, and you still won't have to pay for the audit.

We're here to spend the time going through your energy bills so that you don't have to, as the team at Utility Aid are experienced in doing this and know what to look out for. You are not under any obligation to make any changes to your utility spending if you don't want to. Advice will be impartial and a variety of energy options and costs will be presented, and in the end it's your choice, your saving.

WHAT DOES THE PROCESS INVOLVE? WHAT WILL YOU NEED FROM ME?

The whole process begins with a phone call, where a member of the Utility Aid team will establish what kind of service will benefit you, if any.

Once Utility Aid has worked out your current situation, they will then search the market for energy rates and tariffs available to you. They will also look at other factors, like how you are being billed at the moment and whether you would prefer to use electricity from a green source.

You will need to provide copies of your latest energy bills and, if you have them, contracts. You will also need to be available to answer any questions the team might have. Other than that, you can let Utility Aid do all of the work for you.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE ENERGY AUDIT IS COMPLETE?

After your energy audit is completed, your contact with us needn't stop there. The experts at Utility Aid will keep track of the contract you are on and when it's up for renewal, and can then work with you again to get the best deals. To sum up ~ we want our relationship with you to be a lasting one.

SOUNDS GOOD. NOW HOW DO I START THE BALL ROLLING?

All you need to do is call the Utility Aid team on 0808 1788 170 and an energy consultant will take it from there. After providing them with the things they need, you can sit back and they will do the rest.

Appendix 1: Letter from CSCC



Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association
www.csccl.org.uk

Damian Weare
Hon. Secretary:
British Caving Association
2, The Barn
Sal Royd Road
Low Moor
BRADFORD
BD12 0JN

Hayley Clark
Wilderhope
West Grimstead
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP5 3RF

06 February 2012

Dear Damian,

The BCA Training Committee, has been a subject much discussed at recent CSCC meetings, following our General Meeting on 04/02/12 we would like to raise the following:-

We (CSCC) received the draft minutes for the BCA Training Committee meeting held on 1st October 2011 on 31st January 2012 and note they contain a record of discussions and proposals concerning significant changes to both the membership and operation of the committee. These appear to stem from the Training Officers Report to the 2011 BCA Annual General Meeting on 11th June 2011, a report which was accepted unanimously by the meeting after discussion.

In accepting this report and allowing these proposals for changes to the Training Committee to proceed, the BCA is in fundamental breach of it's Constitution and, in particular, the proper notification to it's membership of proposed changes to the Constitution as outlined in clauses 8.4 and 8.5.

The Training Officers Report noted above clearly includes a proposal for a change to clause 7.2 of the Constitution regarding the membership of the Training Committee which has not been properly notified. Constitutional changes cannot be proposed or inferred in Officers Reports given the timescale outlined in clause 8.5, the Training Officers Report to the 2011 BCA AGM is dated June 2011.

The CSCC insist that the Training Committee be advised that they cannot, on an ad-hoc basis, make changes to their membership without proper discussion or referral to the BCA National Council and AGM.

The CSCC rarely receives notification or agenda for Training Committee meetings, if at all, with the minutes following on belatedly, four months after the event for the latest minutes. It has been the CSCC's continued intention to send representatives to the Training Committee but lack of proper notification of meetings has prevented this.

Yours Sincerely

Hayley Clark

CSCC Secretary

Draft Manual of Operations

Part 3: for Council Meeting on 24th March 2012



Please Note: Items in yellow are either brand new, or include changes to a previously-presented version.

1. Standing Committees

[...]

1.7 Committee Membership & Voting Procedures

As well as the Standing Committee Convenor, who shall hold the casting vote at Standing Committees, each Constituent Body and Regional Council is entitled to a seat, and a vote, at a Standing Committee. The Constituent Body and Regional Council Representatives shall be confirmed by their Body annually.

Other Committee members may be co-opted by the Standing Committee, either to fulfil specific roles, or because they bring special skills. These co-opted members are full members of the Standing Committee and also hold a vote. The Standing Committee Convenor should inform Council of any new co-options by way of their next written report.

Any casting vote by the Convenor will normally be in favour of a status quo.

[...]

5.2 Complaints Process

5.2.1 General Principles

- Complaints should be treated seriously and investigated.
- Complaints should be resolved as quickly as reasonably practical given the volunteer nature of the organisation.
- Anyone involved in a complaint (either as the person being complained about, or the person making the complaint) should be given the opportunity to state their case.
- Written records of all actions, including details of the investigation carried out, should be kept and copied to one or more of BCA Executive.
- Any complaint of a potentially criminal nature should **bypass the process below** and be immediately passed onto the Police. One or more members of BCA Executive shall also be informed as soon as possible. All responsibility for BCA's response will then rest with them.

5.2.2 The Process

Stage 1 (Informal Complaint)

Initially an informal complaint should be made to an appropriate person in BCA, such as the relevant Officer or, if the complainant is unwilling, or unable to approach that person, then to one of BCA Executive. The emphasis at this stage is on dealing with the complaint as efficiently and informally as possible.

Stage 2 (Formal Written Complaint)

If the complaint cannot be dealt with satisfactorily at Stage 1, then a formal complaint should be made in writing to the appropriate person in BCA. This will normally be acknowledged in writing within 14 days and the recipient should immediately inform one or more of BCA Executive of the complaint and their intended course of action. In most situations it is anticipated that the complainant will receive a formal written response within 3 weeks of initially making the complaint.

Stage 3 (BCA Council)

Should the complainant be unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, then they should write to the Secretary explaining their complaint. The Secretary will normally acknowledge receipt within 14 days, and include an invitation to attend the next Council Meeting, where the complaint will be discussed. If the complainant is

unable to attend, they can opt to have the complaint considered in their absence, or for discussion to be postponed until the next Council Meeting. It will normally be expected that complainants will present their complaint within this timescale, or else their complaint will be rejected. Following the Council Meeting the Secretary will normally write within 14 days to formally advise of Council's decision and the mechanism for appealing.

Stage 4 (Appeal to Appeals Panel)

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3, then they have the right to appeal to an Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel will be convened by a Chair, who will have been appointed by BCA Executive prior to the Council Meeting at stage 3. The Chair will normally acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 14 days, and will seek to arrange a mutually convenient date for the Appeals Panel. The Panel will normally be made up of 4 other members selected by the Chair from nominations from the Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies. The Chair will then normally write within 14 days of the Appeals Panel to formally advise of the Panel's decision.

5.6 Disciplinary Policies

It should be noted that employees are subject to internal disciplinary rules and processes and are NOT covered by either of these Policies.

5.6.1 Policy for Award Holders

5.6.1.1 General Principles:

- No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter in question has been investigated.
- At every stage individuals will have the opportunity to state their case, either themselves or through a representative.
- There is always a right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty and this appeal will be held by a panel that is independent of the original decision makers.

5.6.1.2 Process

5.6.1.2.1 A Potential Disciplinary Matter

Once it has become clear that an Award Holder (currently LCMLA, CIC or Anchor Installer) may have acted against BCA's interests, one or more of BCA Executive will be informed. Executive will then consult with the appropriate Officer (currently Training or Equipment & Techniques) to ascertain whether or not the matter may be related to the Award they hold. If the Officer is unavailable within an appropriate timescale, then Executive should consult with another experienced member of the Committee for judgement.

If the matter IS deemed to relate to the Award held, then this Policy should be followed. If not, then the individual will be treated according to the non-award holder Policy.

BCA Executive will now appoint someone, usually the appropriate Officer, to investigate the circumstances and determine whether or not the matter should be treated as a formal disciplinary matter.

5.6.1.2.2 A Formal Disciplinary Matter

Any formal disciplinary matter will be heard by a Disciplinary Panel. This Panel will usually be either the appropriate Standing Committee or National Council depending on the nature of the matter. However, if the matter is sufficiently urgent, it will be dealt with by BCA Executive following their normal Method of Working.

From the outset Executive will appoint a Chair of the Appeals Panel who must ensure they are not involved in any way in the Disciplinary Panel.

When the arrangements for the Disciplinary Panel have been finalised, the individual will be written to at their last known address advising them of the complaint made against them, the time, date and location of the Disciplinary Panel, and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. A period of 30 days shall usually be given between this and the formal hearing, although in some cases, particularly those relating to safety, this may be reduced.

Following the Disciplinary Panel, the individual will be written to again, usually within 14 days of the hearing, outlining the outcome of the process and giving the opportunity for appeal.

5.6.1.2.3 The Appeals Process

An appeal will be dealt with by an Appeals Panel. This will be convened by the Chair of the Appeals Panel and will normally consist of 4 other people chosen by the Chair from nominations made by the Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies. None shall have been involved in the original Disciplinary Panel.

The Chair will seek to arrange a mutually convenient date and location for the Appeal, and then write to the individual formally advising them of the appeal and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. Until the Appeal the original disciplinary action will stand.

Following the appeal, the individual will be written to again outlining the outcome of the process. This will usually be within 14 days of the hearing.

5.6.1.3 Sanctions

Every disciplinary case should be considered individually. After determining the seriousness of the conduct, the Disciplinary Panel should consider any aggravating or mitigating factors before deciding on the appropriate sanction. Available sanctions include:

- words of advice.
- a verbal warning.
- a written warning.
- suspension of membership and/or certificates or awards for a fixed period.
- expulsion from BCA and/or removal of certificates or awards.

5.6.1.4 Notes

1. Employees are subject to internal disciplinary rules and processes and are NOT covered by this Policy.
2. In the case of suspension of membership, this may also include the temporary removal of membership benefits, such as insurance.
3. When a decision involves removing or suspending an individual's leadership or instructing award, it is important to understand that this will probably have a serious impact on their professional well-being, quite likely including an immediate loss of income. This should be borne in mind as part of the decision-making process, but needs to be balanced against the need to maintain confidence in BCA's award schemes.

5.6.2 Policy for non-Award-Holding Individuals, Group and Associate Members

5.6.2.1 General Principles:

- No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter in question has been investigated.
- At every stage individuals, groups or associate members will have the opportunity to state their case, either themselves or through a representative.
- There is always a right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty and this appeal will be held by a panel that is independent of the original decision makers.

5.6.2.2 Process

5.6.2.1 A Potential Disciplinary Matter

Once it has become clear that an individual or group may have acted against BCA's interests, the following process should generally be followed:

One or more of BCA Executive will be informed who will initially check to ensure they are not a BCA Award Holder, in which case they are treated according to the Award-Holder Policy. BCA Executive will then appoint someone to investigate the circumstances and determine whether or not the matter should be treated as a formal disciplinary matter.

5.6.2.2 A Formal Disciplinary Matter

Any formal disciplinary matter will be heard by a Disciplinary Panel. This Panel will usually be either the appropriate Standing Committee or National Council depending on the nature of the matter. However, if the matter is sufficiently urgent, it will be dealt with by BCA Executive following their normal Method of Working.

From the outset Executive will appoint a Chair of the Appeals Panel who must ensure they are not involved in any way in the Disciplinary Panel.

When the arrangements for the Disciplinary Panel have been finalised, the individual, group or associate member will be written to at their last known address advising them of the complaint made against them, the time, date and location of the Disciplinary Panel, and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. A period of 30 days shall usually be given between this and the formal hearing, although in some cases, particularly those relating to safety, this may be reduced.

Following the Disciplinary Panel, the individual, group or associate member will be written to again, usually within 14 days of the hearing, outlining the outcome of the process and giving the opportunity for appeal.

5.6.2.3 The Appeals Process

An appeal will be dealt with by an Appeals Panel. This will be convened by the Chair of the Appeals Panel and will normally consist of 4 other people chosen by the Chair from nominations made by the Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies. None shall have been involved in the original Disciplinary Panel.

The Chair will seek to arrange a mutually convenient date and location for the Appeal, and then write to the individual, group or associate member formally advising them of the appeal and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. Until the Appeal the original disciplinary action will stand.

Following the appeal, the individual, group or associate will be written to again outlining the outcome of the process. This will usually be within 14 days of the hearing.

5.6.3 Sanctions

Every disciplinary case should be considered individually. After determining the seriousness of the conduct, the Disciplinary Panel should consider any aggravating or mitigating factors before deciding on the appropriate sanction. Available sanctions include:

- words of advice
- a verbal warning
- a written warning
- suspension of membership and/or certificates or awards for a fixed period
- expulsion from BCA and/or removal of certificates or awards.

5.6.4 Notes

1. Employees are subject to internal disciplinary rules and processes and are NOT covered by this Policy.
2. In the case of suspension of membership, this may also include the temporary removal of membership benefits, such as insurance.
3. In the case of a club being suspended or expelled, any Club Individual Members from that club will be written to and offered either: a pro-rata refund; the option of transferring their membership to a DIM (on payment of the appropriate fee); or the chance to switch their main club affiliation to another member club they are a member of. In the event of a successful appeal BCA will subsequently refund any additional membership fees paid by an individual as a result of the above.

5.10 Membership

[...]

5.10.2 Honorary Members

The Constitution allows for the election of a President. There are also a small number of BCRA Honorary Members. These members do not pay a fee, but their membership is handled in the normal way by the Membership Administrator.

[...]

Access-Controlling Bodies: Access-Controlling Bodies join annually and pay a basic membership fee. The membership process is handled by the Membership Administrator.

[...]

6. General Meetings

Section 8 of the Constitution provides for three types of General Meeting:

6.1 Annual General Meetings

The Constitution requires that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) be held annually in June (or as soon as reasonable thereafter).

6.1.1 Timeline

At least 18 weeks before: Secretary to publish time, date and place of meeting. This is a Constitutional requirement. Current practice involves posting a card to all members (except CIMS) from the previous year as well as any new members in the current year. The card includes time, date and place, as well as a request for nominations and agenda items together with the deadline date. An example is available [here](#).

Midnight on Day of Council Meeting Preceding AGM: Deadline for receipt of nominations for posts by Secretary, as well as any items to be raised at the AGM. This is a Constitutional requirement.

At least 6 weeks before: Secretary to circulate Agenda to members. Current practice involves posting a copy to all members (except CIMs). This is a Constitutional requirement.

Two weeks before: Officers, Working-Group Chairmen etc to forward written reports to Secretary.

At least 7 days before: Secretary to publish online the Reports document for the meeting, together with any other supporting documentation.

1 month after: Secretary to publish Draft Minutes online following the process below.

6.1.2 Agenda Items

Section 8.13 of the Constitution lists the purposes of an AGM. It is good practice to adhere to the content and the order of these in building and Agenda. The 2011 Agenda is available as an example of current practice.

6.1.3 Written Reports

These should be prepared and forwarded to the Secretary at least 14 days prior to the AGM. This ensures timely publication and, therefore, communication with members. Reports should be included from:

- Chairman
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Standing Committee Chairmen (including reports on the work of annual appointees from each Committee)
- Working Party Convenors
- Council appointees whose work does not come under a Standing-Committee or Working-Party heading
- Any other individual or group specifically requested to do so by either Council or an AGM. Currently this is the British Caving Library.

The reports should include a summary of the work completed this year, together with any particular successes or difficulties that have been encountered. They should also give an indication of work planned for the coming 12 months. It is important to remember that reports are written for the general membership rather than Council Members and, therefore, need to assume a less in-depth knowledge of BCA's workings. They should also cover the whole of the previous year, rather than simply the period since the last Council meeting.

6.1.4 Attendance

Anyone may attend the AGM, although the Chairman has the right to exclude anyone if the meeting so decides.

6.1.5 Voting Procedures

Voting is split into two Houses: Individual Members and Group Members.

Individual Vote: All current individual members, including honorary members, are entitled to vote in the Individual round of voting, except the Chairman and Recorder of the meeting.

Group Vote: Each group member is entitled to send one voting delegate, who shall have been authorised to do so in writing by that group. No individual shall vote on behalf of more than one group member.

The quorum is 10 individual members and 5 persons eligible to vote on behalf of group members.

Any motion NOT affecting the Constitution shall be taken as having succeeded if a majority of those eligible to vote in both houses support it. For a motion affecting the Constitution then a 70% majority is required in both houses.

6.1.6 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of meetings should be prepared by the recorder (who is appointed by the Council meeting preceding the AGM). The Minutes should include:

- details of those present
- apologies for absence
- any matters arising from previous minutes
- reports to Council from Executive, Officers and appointees (which should be attached to the minutes)
- details of discussions on specific issues, points raised and decisions taken including, where appropriate, records of votes for and votes against.
- a means of indicating actions to be taken outside of the meeting, such as an "Action Log".

Minutes and other papers should be distributed as soon as practical after meetings. In the interests of effective communication, it is considered good practice to distribute Draft Minutes, before they are accepted by the next meeting, rather than waiting a full year for fully Approved Minutes. Before publication, the Draft Minutes should be agreed by each of BCA Executive. However, in the event that this is not possible within one month of the meeting, the Secretary should ask another Council Member, or Members, to check them before publishing.

On publishing Draft Minutes the Secretary should send them to:

- all members of National Council
- anyone listed in the attendance list for that meeting.
- any other person or organisation the Secretary or another Council Member feels may have an interest. Currently this includes: the Secretaries of the Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies, plus the FODCCAG Secretary.

A copy of all Draft Minutes should also be added to the relevant section of the BCA website, ensuring that any Draft Minutes are clearly marked as such, both in the document itself and on the website.

Only in the event of significant changes being made at the following Meeting, should approved Minutes also be distributed as above, although they should always be updated on the BCA Website.

6.2 Special General Meetings

A Special General Meeting (SGM) can be called by:

- BCA Executive
- BCA Council
- 20 or more members eligible to vote

An Agenda should be prepared and circulated no less than 12 weeks before the meeting, and this shall be constrained to the matter or matters put in the original request for a meeting. Apart from this, arrangements are the same as for Annual General Meetings.

6.3 Emergency General Meetings

An Emergency General Meeting (EGM) can be called by any 2 members of BCA Executive.

An Agenda should be prepared and circulated no less than 2 weeks before the meeting, and only the subject giving rise to the emergency may be discussed. Apart from this, arrangements are the same as for Annual General Meetings.

7. Working Groups

7.1 Overview

Working Groups are dealt with by 6.10 of the Constitution. They are set up by BCA Council, which should determine their terms of reference.

Working Groups should report to Council in writing at each meeting.

Their continued operation and Convenors, together with a review of their remit, shall take place annually at the June Council meeting (directly following the AGM).

Current Working Groups are:

- IT Working Group
 - National Cave Registry
 - Radon Working Group
 - Youth & Development

7.2 IT Working Group

Convenor: David Cooke

Reports to: Council & Annual General Meetings

Terms of Reference:

- to manage and coordinate BCA's IT infrastructure.
- to commission and implement IT projects as deemed desirable for BCA.
- to provide a resource of expertise available to BCA.