

# NATIONAL CAVING ASSOCIATION / BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

## Minutes of the Conjoint Meeting of NCA / BCA National Councils on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2004 Held at the Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch.

Mick Day (MD)	NCA & BCA Chairman
Eddy Hill (EH)	NCA & BCA Secretary
Bob Mehew (BM)	NCA & BCA Treasurer
Elsie Little (EL)	NCA & BCA Conservation & Access Officer
Dave Judson (DJ)	NCA & BCA Legal & Insurance Officer; BCRA Rep
Les Williams (LW)	NCA & BCA Publications and Information Officer, NCA & BCA Web Master
David Cooke (DC)	NCA & BCA National Cave Registry Coordinator, NCA Trustee, CSCC Rep to NCA & BCA
Jenny Potts (JP)	NCA Speleoscene Editor, NCA Trustee, DCA Rep to NCA & BCA
Owen Clarke (OC)	NCA & BCA Club Representative
Chris Broome (CB)	NCA & BCA Club Representative
Glenn Jones (GJ)	CNCC Rep to NCA & BCA
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Rep to NCA & BCA

The meeting started at 10:30am

### 1) Chairman's Welcome and Address

MD welcomed everyone to the proceedings.

### 2) Apologies for Absence

Pete Allwright BCRC  
Alan Finch WPCST  
Jim Cochrane Newsletter Editor (candidate)  
Nick Williams  
Andy Pyke

### 3) Minutes of the NCA/BCA Council Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2004

These were signed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

### 4) Matters Arising from the Minutes of NCA Council Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> March 2004

It was agreed that these should be covered during the respective officer's reports.

- **Matters arising from the minutes of NCA Council Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> January 2004.**

Point 6.5(b) Action Completed

Point 5.2	Action Completed
Point 7.2	Continued Motion
Point 7.4	Equity – Action Completed but council agrees MD should continue monitoring policy.
Point 7.5	DCA – Done CNCC – Not yet achieved CCC – Not yet achieved
Point 8	Secretary’s report – All actions completed.

## 5) NCA / BCA Chairman’s Report

MD dealt with several issues during his report, as listed below.

- a) The Mexican Incident: Regarding this issue, MD informed council that he had agreed with Nick Williams early on, that they should refer all press enquiries to the Army Press Office, since they were more up to date on events taking place and were better prepared to deal with press enquiries.

Concurrently, MD would like to report the receipt of several e-mails from Mexican cavers apologising for the media circus and their government’s behaviour. This is indicative that our relations with Mexican cavers have not been adversely affected by the incident.

To carry the issue forward and mend relations with the Mexican government, MD reports Bill Stone has drafted a letter to be signed by selected individuals and National Speleological Societies. Andy Eavis will be asked to sign the letter as an individual, if not as vice-president of UIS. The matter will be discussed further at the next UIS meeting. Overall, a cautious, very diplomatic action is being taken, in order not to aggravate matters.

The council empowers the Chairman to form his own judgement on the content of the letter and sign it accordingly on behalf of NCA/BCA.

**Proposed: BM**

**Agreed: unanimously**

**Action: MD**

The above issue lead to a discussion on whether it would be best for NCA/BCA to have a press officer. It was soon realised that the task would be too onerous for any one individual to undertake and that said individual could not be expected to be fully informed on regional matters. As such, it was argued that if there was to be a press officer, then there should be one per region. The obvious conclusion is that since all regions are represented in Council, Council should deal with press issues. To this end, it was proposed that:

- Guidelines are provided to members of Council as to how best to deal with the press. BM to draft guidelines and pass to the executive to check.

**Action: BM**

- EL proposed an article, perhaps in Descent, expounding the benefits and perils of speaking with the press. BM to ask Chris Howes and John Sims and/or Martin Farr to write said article.

**Action: BM**

- b) Working at Height: The consultation period is now theoretically closed. There is a chance that the HSE may consider a variant to accommodate climbing and caving. MD reported writing a letter, addressed to HSE, to represent the views of the amateur.
- c) Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR): MD reported two future meetings, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2004 – Presentation on Countryside Sports and Recreation) and 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2004 – Meeting of the Outdoor Pursuit Division). Council agreed that MD should attend these.

**Action: MD**

- d) UK Sport and Sport England: MD stated that NCA/BCA must regularise and re-establish a relationship with these bodies so as to be in a position to receive grants from them. It was pointed out that a proposal from Training is required in order to receive sports grants. Furthermore, RCC's are able to receive grants directly from their local sports governing body and from their local authorities, so they should establish some sort of relationship with these. It was proposed that the Secretary contact RCC Secretaries to hi-light this.

**Action: EH**

MD will continue contacts with sporting bodies throughout the year, so as to maintain grant applications and to introduce BCA into the system.

- e) MD presented a request from Sheffield City Library for sporting publications. Council decided no publications should be forwarded to such institutions (at the danger of setting a precedent and receiving thousands of requests) but that they should be supplied with a list of current publications available for sale.

It was thought a good idea to place leaflets in target libraries and National Parks. LW will consider this.

**Action: LW**

Furthermore, EH reported receiving a request for caving posters from an educational establishment. During discussion it was agreed that it would benefit BCA to have a promotional poster and that this idea should be followed up.

**Action: LW**

- f) It MD, JD and EL attended an Equity meeting – ‘Diversity in the Countryside’ – and found their approach to promoting outdoor activities, blinkered and unsuitable. MD will decide if the next meeting deserves representation from NCA/BCA.

BM took this opportunity to seek acceptance of the Equality statement (Constitution clause 4.6) to be placed on the website.

**Action: LW**

## 6) Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported he had little new to report other than he is getting used to the role and finding his feet.

## 7) Treasurer's Report

- a) BM introduced his paper on "Regularisation of BCA and NCA Bank Accounts". He briefly reviewed the current situation and the proposals for BCA. The BCA constitution requires that a minimum of 2 out of 3 signatories for an account validate cheques. After some discussion it was agreed that there should be 4 people able to sign an account.

It was agreed that the existing HSBC – BCA account (used for insurance income and some BCA payments) – with current signatories of 2 out of M Day, B Mehew, J Potts (ex NCA Secretary) and N Williams, should have J Potts replaced by E Hill as current BCA Secretary. It was noted that N Williams holds the cheque book for this account.

It was agreed that two new accounts should be set up:

- HSBC – BCA No 1 (main account used for most transactions) M Day, B Mehew, E Hill and N Williams to act as signatories. It was agreed that B Mehew should hold the chequebook for this account.
- HSBC – Training (used for training award schemes income and training payments) Signatories to be M Day, B Mehew, E Hill and I Williams. It was agreed that B Mehew should hold the chequebook for this account.

The meeting accepted that there was no need at this time for separate BCA accounts for the work of the Conservation & Access, Equipment, Legal & Insurance or Publications and Information committees.

Discussion on a suitable higher interest account to hold BCA's cash reserves agreed that BM should approach CAFCash to enquire if a CASC body could make use of their facilities. BM also agreed to look into the pros and cons of BCA becoming a CASC.

**Action: BM**

In discussion on the existing accounts, BM stated that it was his intention to close all of the NCA accounts after 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004. EL noted that there would be cheques coming in after this date and it would be better that one account be kept open. It was agreed that HSBC – NCA No 1 (main account used for most transactions) with current signatories of 2 out of MD, BM and G Smith (ex NCA Secretary) should remain open. It was agreed that G Smith should be replaced by E Hill as current NCA Secretary. It was noted that BM holds the chequebook for this account.

**Action: BM to organise new accounts and change of signatures.**

- b) BM then raised the issue of how membership data is handled. After some discussion it was agreed that NCA's / BCA's position requires clarification. It was proposed that the Legal and Insurance officer should investigate the need for BCA to register on the Data Protection Act (1998) and on the requirement for individual member signatures.

**Action: DJ**

It was further agreed that once Council understood BCA's position with respect to the Data Protection Act (1998), Council will give BCA members a 'statement of intent' with regard to the data held.

## **8) Conservation Officer's Report**

- a) EL reports finding the right person to deal with within the National Trust with regards to access issues.
- b) DEFRA are counselling NCA/BCA with regards to countryside access and the use of motorised vehicles. In particular illegal usage of motorcycles and 4X4 on paths. DEFRA is consulting NCA/BCA on how changing access law will affect us.

EL would like to see these users not banned but given a legitimate alternative, since the removal of legal rights of way may cause difficulty in reaching certain caves.

- c) Cavers are helping document the presence of bats underground for the Bat Conservation Trust. EL proposed a number of handbooks be handed to organisations, such as the BCT, we deal with.

**Approved**

- d) The Conservation an Access Group has accepted the Cave Conservation Code but the minimum impact policy is still in query.

Reps from RCC's present indicated the drafts for these were either accepted or at various stages of discussion due to meeting dates but neither thought there would be a problem in their acceptance. Hence, it was proposed that BCA accepts the Cave Conservation Code as a BCA policy at the next AGM and that until that time it is a BCA Adopted Policy.

**Approved**

## **9) Training Officer's Report**

- a) LCMLA handbook will be out by the end of June provided typing is finished.
- b) CIC handbook has been placed on the website as a pdf download for use this year. A hardcopy is to be produced at the end of the year under BCA banner.
- c) Mines visited by led parties or CIC led groups must have been inspected by a mining engineer and deemed suitable. This is a requirement of the HSE. These inspections have, by en large, been carried out by Dave Carlile. His insurance broker, however, has now declined to renew his

insurance; hence Dave can no longer validate the inspection reports. Unless this issue is resolved, visits to mines will have to cease as the inspection reports run out of date.

DJ is investigating of providing insurance through BCA's insurance broker. To further action will be taken until DJ obtains a response from them.

NAMHO were asked whether they have any members that are qualified to carry out the inspections. Their provisional answer was no but it was agreed that the scheme should broaden beyond one individual.

## **10) Equipment Officer's Report**

The equipment officer had nothing to report

## **11) Publications and Information Officer's Report**

- a) It was reported that the BCA Handbook had gone out to all member clubs but not to Direct Individual Members, since membership cards are not ready. These should be ready by the end of May.

The BCA Newsletter is to advertise the Handbook is for sale.

It was noted that correction slips will have to be made for Handbooks sold to those not receiving the Newsletter. A volunteer was sought to put together the corrections and amendments.

**BM to action**

- b) The issue of a BCA logo competition was raised. It was accepted that a set of competition rules would have to be formulated and that a volunteer would be needed to print and exhibit the entries at Hidden Earth. The winner of the competition will cede copyright to BCA; in return, BCA will provide a prize of £50.

**Proposed: BM**

**Agreed**

**Action: DC**

## **12) Webmaster's Report**

- a) The webmaster reports the New BCA site will be ready by the end of the year. Meanwhile, the reseller of webspace is not advertised but is accumulating business regardless. Furthermore, it is now ready to take on new business. NB: The Cave Registry is hosted here at no charge, as previously agreed by the BCA Council, this is a BCA expense.
- b) LW reminded all officers that he is creating web site pages for each committee. This is an ongoing action from the minutes from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2004.
- c) DC reports that the old NCA website is up and running, hosted by Graham Price. It was proposed that Graham Price is approached in a first instance and asked to take down this site; should this fail, the Secretary should use his judgement to pursue this matter to completion.

**13) Legal & Insurance Officer's Report**

- a) The L&I Officer reports that the second issue of Legal and Insurance has been completed
- b) Section 68 CROW (re: driving motor vehicles over common land) is now invalid.
- c) Following an enquiry by BM, the child protection and guidance policy is to appear on the BCA website.

**14) Convenor of Radon Party**

The convenor of the Radon Party had nothing to report.

**15) National Cave Register**

DC reports that progress is being made, although, he has received limited response. Updates are available on the website.

**16) International**

Not present.

BM requested electronic information for the China Caves Project to link to our website.

It was proposed that Andy Eavis should have the ability to use the names of NCA / BCA in advertising and promotion of these bodies.

**Agreed by Council**

**17) Appointment of BCA Newsletter Editor**

Jim Cochrane was appointed in absentia.

**18) Other Business**

- a) EH introduced the Provision of Volunteering Bill. The Bill seeks to reduce the risk of litigation following a bonafide accident and to re-introduce the concept of inherent risk.

It is expected that the Bill will be talked out at the third reading. The reasons are unknown but evidence indicates the Government is keen/and actively promoting volunteers so it is thought that the Bill may be enacted in a different way or introduced as part of a broader legislature by Government at a later date.

MD will make further enquiries at CCPR on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

**Action MD**

Council grants authority to EH to write in support of the Bill on behalf of NCA. Should the Bill not progress, Council grants authority to EH to write to the Minister who's concern this is, expressing 'disappointment and concern'

**Action EH**

- b) BM indicated that BCA's constitution requires individual member applications are considered. BM proposed an individual should be duly delegated to carry out this task. Following discussion it was agreed that this person should remain as Nick Williams for the time being and EH would provide cover.

**Action NW & EH**

- c) BM raised the issue of provisional member clubs i.e. those that have been accepted directly into BCA this year due to their membership of NCA and / or BCRA. As of December these clubs will have to apply for membership of BCA. BCA Constitution clause 5.1 states that: "The Association shall have the following classes of membership: ... b) Constitutionally established caving, mining and other related clubs together with constitutionally established National Bodies, constitutionally established Regional Caving Councils, Cave Rescue Organisations and Access Controlling Bodies..." Clause 5.3 further estates that applications for membership will be accompanied by a copy of the constitution of the applicant. To pre-empt the mad rush in December, BM proposed that BCA Secretary formally writes to every club and requests a copy of their constitution.

**Seconded: LW Action: EH**

EL raised the point that the Secretary should be able to co-opt help to perform this onerous task.

**Agreed by Council**

**There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 16:33.**

**Eddy Hill  
20<sup>th</sup> May 2004**