



British Caving Association

Minutes of BCA Council Meeting, 10.30am, 7th. October 2006, Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch

Present:	BCA Chairman	Mick Day [MD]
	BCA Treasurer	Jonathan Roberts [JR]
	Acting Secretary BCA / DCA Rep.	Jenny Potts [JP]
	BCA Equipment Officer	Andy Pryke [AP]
	BCA Publications & Information Officer	Les Williams [LW]
	Cambrian Caving Council Rep.	Sue Mabbett [SM]
	CNCC Rep. / BCA Membership Administrator	Glenn Jones [GJ]
	Acting CSCC Rep.	Steve King [SK]
	DCUC and Pengelly Rep.	David Jean [DJe]
	NAMHO Rep.	Steve Holding [SH]
	Club Rep. (Wessex C. C.) / Cave Registry Sec.	Dave Cooke [DC]
	Club Rep. (Orpheus C. C.)	Boyd Potts [BP]
	Club Rep. (Cwmbran C. C.)	Owen Clarke [OC]
	Individual Member Rep.	Emma Porter [EP]
	Individual Member Rep.	Simon Froude [SF]
	Rope Test Officer (& Former NCA Treasurer)	Bob Mehew [BM]

1. Chairman's Welcome:

The Chairman welcomed members to the Meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence Received From:

Training Officer, Idris Williams [IW]; Conservation & Access Officer, Elsie Little [EL]; Legal & Insurance Officer, David Judson [DJu]; Council of Higher Ed. Caving Clubs Rep., Chris Jewell [CJ]; International Rep., Andy Eavis [AE]; Radon Working Party Chairman, Clark Friend [CF].

3. Applications for Club Membership:

GJ said there were none.

4. Approve Minutes of Council Meeting of 17 June 2006:

(Minutes previously circulated and draft version on website.)

Amend 2nd. sentence of item 13 to read: "She will follow up with DCA."

Minutes of 17 June 2006 approved, subject to the above amendment. Agreed unanimously.

5. Matters Arising Therefrom not otherwise covered:

- 5.1 4 **AGM 2006 Minutes:** JP has placed the draft Minutes on the website.
- 5.2 9 **Secretary, Paula Grgich-Warke has stepped down:** JP agreed to act as Secretary until the 2007 BCA AGM, pending the election of a new Secretary. MD has collected the BCA computer and boxes of documents from PGW and most are stored at his house for the present, ready to be handed over.
- 5.3 10 **Outstanding invoicing for web hosting:** Not yet done but LW had it in hand. JP queried whether, as it had been suggested that the invoicing required was complicated, it might be more cost-effective for BCA to offer basic web hosting free of charge to its member clubs. Agree to consider this at a later stage in the meeting.
- 5.4 23.c **Draft PR and Media Contact Protocol (BM):** Agreed the document needed to be fleshed out with facts and statistics. JP would circulate a revised draft for comments to reach BM by end November.

6. Chairman's Business:

6.1 Chairman's Report: (Written report tabled.)

6.1.a Discussion re. Sports Council / Funding: Noted that the "Lottery Bingo" provides no definite income but there may be an unspecified amount with no "strings" attached. JP: suggested that the funds we could gain from Sports Council were not as important to us as their recognition of BCA as the "National Governing Body" of the sport in Britain, which meant recognition by other government bodies. MD: suggested that help from CCPR might be in the form of assistance in improving BCA's administrative skills. GJ: need for a "Manual of Operations" to guide BCA - noted an electronic version of a draft MoO was available. BM: concerned that the money available to BCA is spent efficiently; it was noted that BCA Special Committees had not set budgets and did not know how much was available for them to spend. MD: in the past the Sports Council had changed the amounts available to NCA; he queried whether we should review BCA's Special Committee structure. AP: suggested the Special Committees needed objectives set on which they could report to Council.

6.1.b Winding up NCA: MD noted that a "winding up meeting" of NCA was needed to finalise and approve the NCA accounts and the Trustees should arrange for these to be "examined" and published. This would be dealt with as part of the BCA AGM Agenda.

6.2 **Venture Extreme: (Documents tabled.)** MD: explained discussions held with Steve Jones, the promoter of the project. Agreed there was potential for support for expedition funding. There could be venues available for meetings (for which we would be charged) and it might provide a route for new members. General feeling BCA ought to support this project in some way but care needed as to how this is done and BCA should be mindful that it may need to support other similar ventures in the future.

That BCA respond positively and check with other governing bodies of sport involved; negotiate positive outcomes for BCA and check with other interested BCA members, in particular BCRA, ACI and BCRC. Prop. BM. Agreed.

6.2 Cont. MD would write a carefully worded letter to Venture Extreme stating that BCA was minded to support the project but would need to make further enquiries.

7. Acting Secretary's Business:

7.1 Acting Secretary's Report: (Written report tabled.)

7.1.a Discussion: JP: emphasised the need for the Secretary to act as the focus of BCA's communications and suggested that to carry out the responsibilities properly the post required time and effort beyond the resources of a volunteer otherwise employed full time. SM: suggested BCA might need at least a part-time paid general secretary. BM: BCA Executive need to look into the possibility of employing a paid part-time general administrator; begin by identifying requirements. EP offered her help with this.

JP: emphasised the need for a positive BCA presence at Hidden Earth, where a stand could act as a recruiting point, and where members could seek advice from a knowledgeable person with necessary facts at their disposal. BP: (who had assisted on the BCA stand this year) some cavers preferred to use the chance to discuss matters face to face rather use email, phone or letter to raise queries. GJ: he had negotiated that this would not form part of his Membership Administrator's terms of reference.

That the Executive are empowered to let a contract or employ a person on a fixed term contract to sort out the role, functions and activities of a General Administrator with the aim of lifting administrative burdens from officers of BCA.

Prop. BM. ***Agreed unanimously.***

JP: problem of storage of exhibition stands and boxes of historic secretarial records currently stored by MD. LW offered the Hidden Earth equipment store on Mendip for the stands.

7.2 **Euro-Speleo Project - Launching of Activities Funds:** (*Documents circulated.*) Not felt there was any direct benefit to BCA but details could be put in BCA N/L to advise clubs who might want to follow it up.

7.3 Preparations for BCA AGM 2007: (*Document by JP circulated.*)

7.3.a Notification: Noted that, in order to comply with Constitutional deadlines, notification of BCA AGM 2007, nominations required, agenda items requested, etc. must be in BCA N/L no.7, which must reach members before 30th. Dec. This required N/L to reach printers by mid-November, together with up to date address lists for circulation. GJ: to organise circulation lists and liaise with D.Gibson of BCRA on how these should be presented to the printers. JP: to liaise with N/L Editor to ensure relevant material included in N/L no.7 and printers' deadline met.

7.3.b Agenda: JP: printers' work timescale meant agenda drawn up on Constitutional deadline of 20th. January could not be circulated in time to reach members by Constitutional deadline of 10th. February. ***Agreed: Deadline could be met if BCA AGM Agenda produced on paper for circulation by volunteers using normal posting;*** it would also be posted on the website. JP: to arrange for printed agendas; GJ: to liaise with JP and other volunteers re. production of address labels and "envelope-stuffing".

7.3.c Officers' Reports: ***Agreed: Annual Reports of Officers must be available in printed form at AGM. Draft reports to reach Secretary in time for BCA Council on 13th January.*** She would compile as booklet to be printed for circulation to Council with enough extra copies to table at the AGM. Thereafter the minutes of the meeting would be included in the booklet and a complete Annual Report including accounts would be printed and circulated to all members.

7.4 Procedures for contacting CIMs:

7.4.a Constitutional position: ***Agreed*** that present BCA Constitution does not distinguish between CIMs and DIMs in requirement to post ballot papers; total cost to BCA estimated at approx. £2000 for such a circulation. ***Agreed*** that ballot papers must go individually to members, they could not go in bulk via club secretaries for delivery to CIMs. Noted, however, that there is not currently available a complete list of all DIMs and CIMs in a format which would allow this to be done; GJ was not aware of such a requirement as the existing CIMs database compiled by the previous Membership Secretary was used solely to produce insurance cards. The situation could be avoided for 2007 but consideration should be given to future procedures.

7.4.c Club secretaries' duties: ***Agreed:*** JP, DC and BM would liaise to identify the duties of club secretaries in notifying CIMs of BCA business which required their attention.

8. Treasurer's Business:

8.1 Treasurer's Report: (Verbal report given.)

8.1.a JR said that, due to increasing pressures in his personal and professional life he would be standing down as BCA Treasurer. Dave Cooke had agreed to act as Treasurer for the remainder of the year. ***Agreed to co-opt D.Cooke as Acting Treasurer.***

8.1.b Report on balances to end of July 2006: JR: expenses on administration, insurance, etc. had amounted to over £40,000 so far but it was known that there were further expenses to come. Income from membership had amounted to approximately £62,000. Budgeted expenditure was £16,500 but only £5,000 appears to have been spent so far. Allocations were:

- Conservation & Access: £10,000 - none has been spent so far.
- Youth & Development: £2,000 - some has been spent.
- Equipment: £2,500 - none has been spent so far.
- Regional administrative expenses: £2,630+ some has been spent so far.
- Expedition grants: £3,000 - £2,500 spent so far.
- Training and training administration: £14,210 spent; there had been income of £13,310 + funds transferred from NCA.

BCA No.1 account started with £4,600 and has accrued £25,000 transferred from NCA, £2,500 from Sport England and £5,500 from UK Sport.

BCA is currently holding £80,000 in total. This includes the funds kept back to cover the insurance excess in the event of a claim, which we had agreed should stand at £22,500. Note that BCA will be required to pay for the 2007 insurance, cost not yet known.

SK: are claims for Conservation & Access spending intended to be retrospective? CSCC has sent a claim to EL. At EL's request, MD had brought a copy of the relevant email, regarding funding for capping Star Mine, to the meeting. ***Agreed CSCC claim should be met in full.*** DC, as Acting Treasurer, would convene a meeting with Regional Treasurers to agree procedures for claiming expenses from BCA.

BM: Queried whether BCA might be liable for corporation tax for 2005? DC stated that Pat Hall, who is dealing with the I.R. tax return, does not consider that BCA will incur tax. Noted that BM should inform I.R. of NCA's demise and of changes of address, etc. DC noted that IR had agreed to treat clubs with less than £100 tax liability as effectively not being required to pay.

- 8.2 **Proposal that BCA register as a C.A.S.C. (Community Amateur Sports Club):** *(BM's written report tabled.)*
BM: taken this initiative because, as the former Treasurer of NCA, he had urged clubs to take this step to reduce tax liabilities and to incur other benefits. Discussion generally in favour; from some clubs' experience noted it might require some amendment to existing BCA Constitution. *Agreed: Executive to go forward with registration for C.A.S.C. status for BCA, noting that this may require changes to the constitution.*
- 8.3 **Budget for 2007:** *(BM's written report and spreadsheet tabled.)*
- 8.3.a BM explained the details of the budget drawn up: There was general agreement with his figures and his proposal to set a deficit budget for 2007, given that 2006 had been an unusual year and that 2007 should give a better indication of what expenditure BCA would normally expect.
- 8.3.b Expedition grants: SM: could we provide more funding for expeditions? *Agreed: Provide an additional £2,500 to GPF expeditions this year to make up a total of £5,000 net.* The remaining £500 unspent from this year could be transferred to next year.
- 8.3.c Training: BM noted he had not included IW's proposal for a subsidy for the Voluntary Youth Sector. Discussion on this deferred to item 10.
- 8.3.d CIMs: Noted BM's comments re. the CIMs contribution towards a range of activities funded by BCA. *Agreed the income from CIMs could be spent on all activities of BCA other than Handbook, Newsletter and Speleology.*
- 8.3.e Subscriptions for 2007: Noted that the budget proposed 2007 subscriptions remain as for 2006, on the presumption that insurance costs would not rise excessively.
That the budget proposed be adopted and that subscription levels remain as for 2006. Prop. BM, sec. GJ.
Agreed unanimously.
- 9. Conservation & Access Officer's Business:**
- 9.1 **Conservation & Access Officer's Report:** *(EL not present and no written report submitted.)*
JP: no response received to email sent 1st. Oct. to EL:
a) advising of current holdings of C&A publications for sale and current holdings of C&A leaflets - none of which bear the BCA logo;
b) querying whether there was intention to revise and re-publish leaflets in BCA's name;
c) querying lack of website C&A page.
LW: had received nothing from EL to populate the page. Meeting felt this was for regional C&A officers to take up through the C&A Committee, which had not met this year.
- 9.2 **UK Cave Conservation Emergency Fund - revision of Constitution:** JP had included this here since she understood some input from BCA C&A had been expected to BCRA, which was undertaking the revision. The revision was progressing.
- 9.3 **Geocache in Winnats Head Cave:** JP: following representations by DCA this had now been "archived" so details were no longer on the Geocaching Assn. of Great Britain's website; believed the cache itself was now gone. It remained to follow up with GAGB to obtain a general statement of guidance to members that caves should not be used as locations for geocaches.
- 10. Training Officer's Business:**
- 10.1 **Training Officer's Report:** *(IW not present but his written report was tabled.)*
IW's report was noted and there was discussion on points raised.
- 10.1.a Pat Ramsden's Intended resignation: This was noted with regret. *Agreed: the post of Training Administration Service Provider should be advertised.*
- 10.1.b Subsidy for Voluntary Youth Sector: *Agreed: Make available a training subsidy bursary of £1,000 for the Voluntary Youth Sector for this year.* This will continue to be reviewed in the light of take-up. Felt it would devalue the scheme if registration were free; instead the registration fee would be refunded on completion of the first mandatory training course. The principle of further grants was accepted but we needed to know the possible financial impact in the year to come.
- 10.1.c Insurance for Trainer Assessors: IW's comments re. the insurance position of Trainer Assessors were noted. Although we were at the mercy of the insurance industry BCA had attempted to help in the past and would try again, possibly seeking help from AALA or government.
- 11. Equipment Officer's Business:**
- 11.1 **Equipment & Techniques Report:** *(Written report tabled.)*
AP's report was noted.
- 11.2 **Anchor Installation & testing:** There was discussion on the Eco Anchor policy and it was noted that advice varied in other countries where numbers of different anchor types were in use; and also that BMC's current policy was uncertain. OC: the BMC policy had been used as guidance when the original NCA policy had been decided in 1991. AP: this discussion would form a major part of the Equipment Committee meeting arranged for 11th November.
- 11.3 **Rope Testing.** *(BM's written report tabled.)*
BM's report was noted.
- 12. Publications & Information Officer's Business:**
- 12.1 **Publications & Information Officer's Report:** *(LW gave a verbal report.)*
- 12.1.a So You Want To Go Caving: The new SYWTGC leaflets had been produced and were available at the meeting for regional officers and others to take copies as required. JP: explained purpose of these leaflets and the easily updateable insert. It was believed clubs would find them of use to hand out to novices who approached them. JP noted that outdoor centre heads she had consulted saw the need for these to hand out to people interested in going further with caving after an introductory course.
- 12.1.b P&I Meeting: A meeting had been arranged for 18th. November to which all involved parties had been invited and at which outstanding matters re. printing and distribution of publications would be dealt with.
- 12.1.c Invoicing for Web-hosting: This will now go ahead.
- 12.2 **Website:** LW would investigate the disappearance of items said to have been posted on the website by DJu. JP: noted that recently posted set of draft minutes for Council 17 June 2006 had also disappeared from site.

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- 12.3 Newsletter:** LW reported that he and the N/L Editor were now communicating and the Jim Cochrane was keen to continue.
- 12.4 Handbook:** DJu wanted to pass this responsibility on and Damian Weare had agreed to take over as Handbook Editor for the next edition.
- 12.5 Youth & Development Campaign: (CJ not present but his written report was tabled.)**
Discussion on CJ's report and progress so far. There was some concern at lack of liaison between CJ and the Training Officer and between CJ and JP, who had been revising SYWTGC. LW was concerned that no use had been made of BCA's own web-hosting in setting up the www.trycaving.co.uk website. There was now liaison between parties involved and links were being put in place between the main BCA website and the Trycaving website. Council members were encouraged to look for themselves at the Trycaving website to see what had been done so far.
JP: had placed this item under Publications & Information on the agenda as uncertain where it should go. **Agreed: that in future the Youth & Development Initiative should constitute a separate section on the agenda.**
- 12.6 "Club Finder" request: (Document tabled.)**
LW said that a number of requests of this type were received and he had a policy of not giving out club address lists. **Agreed: that BCA should not give out address lists of club or individual members.** Noted that the BCA address list is of some commercial value, as is the use of our logo, so such use should be carefully controlled by BCA.
- 13. Legal & Insurance Officer's Business:**
- 13.1 Legal & Insurance Officer's Report: (DJ not present but his written report was tabled.)**
DJu's report was noted.
- 13.1.a **Underground Britain: Legal & Insurance Issues:** JP reported that there were still 450+ copies of the 2nd.Edn. of "Underground Britain: Legal& Insurance Issues" in stock. **Agreed:** No reprint of UB: L&I Issues needed yet. Recent information re. new fire regulations, etc. should go into the N/L for the present.
- 14. Membership Administrator's Business:**
- 14.1 Membership Administrator's Report: (Written report tabled.)**
GJ's report noted. GJ asked for feedback, in particular from regions, on what output is required from him. Noted that all regions needed up to date lists of club members in order to deal with certain restricted access situations.
- 14.1.a **Club Constitutions:** GJ was uncertain what was required of club constitutions in order to be able to accept new members. A document was in existence, having been agreed previously, and a number of compliant constitutions had been collected from clubs. JP would check that this appeared on the website and would make a copy available to GJ.
- 15. Insurance Manager's Business:**
- 15.1 Insurance Manager's Report:** Nick Williams was not present and had not sent a separate report but GJ would liaise with him re. any queries.
- 15.1.a **Temporary Membership:** JP: this query had been raised by clubs she had spoken to at Hidden Earth and it had an impact on the way clubs could recruit new members. Currently the Insurance FAQs on the website stated that there was a limit of 17 consecutive days in any one year and that this could not be repeated for the same person. GJ will take this up with NW.
- 15.1.b **Cavers who had overpaid or paid twice:** Due to confusion at the beginning of the year, some members had paid their subscription twice. Pat Hall had suggested these be credited with the following year's subscription. GJ was following up these instances.
- 16. Radon Working Party:**
- 16.1 Convenor's Report: (CF not present but his written report was tabled.)**
- 16.1.a **Reconvening the Working Party:** BP explained the background to matter raised by Pete Mellors referred to in the report. **Agreed:** the Convenor be asked to re-convene the Working Party to look at the questions raised.
- 16.2 **Radon Underground publication:** JP reported 378 of the 1st. Edition left in stock. Noted that all now sold by JP and Pat Ramsden included an update slip referring to new regulations superseding those referred to in the book. **Agreed:** Not necessary to do a full reprint of a new edition of the publication but the updated version could be put on the website and a few copies printed to order as required. SK would liaise with CF re. the draft new edition circulated by email.
- 17. Cave Registry Report:**
DC reported steady but slow progress.
- 18. International Representative's Report:**
- 18.1 **(AE not present but his written report was tabled.)**
AE's report noted. Noted also that Ged Campion had attended some meetings.
Noted that, though Sports Council was still providing some funding, BCA was indebted to Andy Eavis for his contribution in maintaining a British presence at international level.
- 19. Any Other Business:**
- 19.1 Forthcoming Dates/Venues:** JP reminded Council of forthcoming meetings already scheduled for 2007:
Saturday, 13th. January, 10.30 at Alvechurch: Council Meeting. Officers' Reports for year 2006 due in to Secretary by this date.
Saturday, 24th. March: Council Meeting to follow after immediately after BCA AGM.
- 19.2 Snailbeach Visit:** EP drew Council's attention to a visit to Snailbeach Mine due on Sunday, 14th.January. Contact her if interested.
- 19.3 Regional Council Minutes:** SK queried whether all regional council minutes could be made available generally in addition to being circulated to their members. CSCC's and DCA's were on respective websites: other councils' minutes were not available on websites and neither were they circulated to other regions.

Meeting closed at 17.33

J.E.Potts, Recorder. 14 October 2006

APPENDED TO THESE MINUTES AND FORMING PART OF THEM IS THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT:

OFFICERS' REPORTS TO BCA COUNCIL MEETING, 7 OCTOBER 2006

- a) **Item 6.1 - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**
- b) **Item 7.1 - ACTING SECRETARY'S REPORT**
- c) **Item 8.2 - PROPOSAL THAT BCA REGISTER AS A COMMUNITY AMATEUR SPORTS CLUB (CASC)**
- d) **Item 8.3 - BCA BUDGET FOR 2007 – A PROPOSAL**
- e) **Item 10.1 - TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT**
- f) **Item 11.1 - EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES REPORT**
- g) **Item 11.3 - ROPE TEST OFFICER'S REPORT**
- h) **Item 12.1 - YOUTH AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE REPORT**
- i) **Item 13 - LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT**
- j) **Item 14 - BCA MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT TO NATIONAL COUNCIL**
- k) **Item 16 - RADON WORKING PARTY REPORT**
- l) **Item 18 - INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT**