

The meeting of the BCA National Council was held  
10:30 am on Saturday 9 June 2007 at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch

**Present —**

Mick Day (MD)	BCA Chairman
Dave Cooke (DC)	BCA Treasurer
Simon Froude (SF)	BCA Honorary Secretary
Graham Mollard (GM)	BCA Training Officer
David Judson (DJ)	Liability & Insurance Officer/BCRA Representative
Les Williams (LW)	Publications and Information Officer / BCA Webmaster
Sue Mabbett (SM)	Cambrian Caving Council Representative
Glenn Jones (GJ)	Council of Northern Caving Clubs Representative
Jenny Potts (JP)	Derbyshire Caving Association Representative
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Representative
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	Ass. Caving Instructors Representative
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Representative, Orpheus Caving Club
Owen Clarke (CC)	Club Representative, Cwmbran Caving Club
Bernie Woodley (BW)	Club Representative, South Wales Caving Club
Emma Porter (EP)	Individual Member Representative
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Annual Handbook Editor / Individual Member Representative

- Chairman's Welcome:** MD welcomed members to this Council Meeting.
- Apologies for Absence:** Received from: Alan Finch, David Jean, Chris Jewell, Steve King, Elsie Little, Charles Milton, Andy Pryke, Karen Slatcher, Idris Williams
- Applications for Club Membership:** Scarborough Caving Club, Constitution and Fee received.
  - Should we inform groups of application process?
  - May be many associate members who have joined as Clubs
- Minutes of Last Council Meeting** (24 March 2007)— Item 6.1c ii List of signatories to the No. 1 Account should have included 'Insurance Manager'. Notes were made to this effect by the Chairman. The minutes were accepted as amended.
- Matters Arising from Last Council Meeting** (24 March 2007)
  - 4.1 & 4.2** Dates for January 2008 Council Meeting and AGM have been agreed with Hall and booked.
  - 6.1.d** Disposal of BCA computer. Need to exercise care in the disposal of BCA assets. In this case there was no problem as the item had zero value and alternative disposal may well have incurred a cost. Action GM to check that data has been erased from computer.
  - 6.2.b** A list of points of contact for Scout caving has been prepared. Action LW to check that we have scout contacts' agreement before publishing list on BCA website.

**OFFICERS' REPORTS**

**6. Chairman**

- A letter of support has been sent to Venture Extreme.
- In the past we have received monies from the Sports Council for admin costs and expeditions. We are currently not receiving any funding from that source. In order to be eligible we would have to take part in a review of management processes by the Sports Council. GJ is currently process mapping the membership system. There is also the basis of a manual of operations in existence. We are some way off being ready for this and until there are tangible benefits available there is little point in pursuing this. Having Governing body status does mean that we are consulted and have greater input into for e.g. CCPR

**7. Secretary**

Draft Minutes of AGM to go onto BCA website with request for amendments to go to SF.

**8. Treasurer**

- a. Well advanced setting up the Standard life deposit account. This is an internet account and money can be paid into it from any account but can only be paid out into another BCA account. Re-affirmed that this account only allows three signatories which will be Treasurer, Chairman and Insurance Manager.
- b. Still trying to find some auditors for the accounts
- c. Internet Banking. HSBC account has been looked at. This allows a primary user who can carry out all activities and secondary users who have limited permissions e.g. viewing all transactions. A dongle is available for additional security. This type of account would be used for a variety of regular payments plus receipt of payments via the Internet. Note that some payments from accounts are confidential and that payment of membership subs to the account needs careful thought before implementation. The constitution states "Authorisation of any transaction shall require a minimum of two signatories". The meeting agreed (For:16; Against:0; Abstentions:1) in principle, at least, that the treasurer could be authorised to carry out transactions, using internet banking, by any other signatory to that account. DC to draft out details of how this could be implemented with consideration of the following controls:- A central register of payments that the Executive can scrutinise; A limit on the maximum permissible transaction value; Recorded authorization by two signatories in total.

**9. Conservation Officer**

- a. Brief report submitted. Currently working on rewriting conservation code. The only Conservation leaflet which NCA had was "Protecting our Caves". More copies of this have been requested. A completely updated version of this publication is required urgently.
- b. Report of North Wales Forestry Commission requiring £5m public liability insurance as a condition to allowing access to land and that negotiations are in progress. Also report that through negotiation Forest of Dean have agreed to £2m PL insurance being required. There is an expectation from a number of bodies that individuals requiring access to land will have £5m PL insurance cover but they frequently back down to a requirement for £2m PL insurance. NFU recommends any farmer with a footpath crossing land should have £2m PL insurance. DJ

**10. Training Officer**

- a. Report tabled (attached).
- b. Training Committee has had the offer to sell Ralph Johnson's training videos. Due to some problems with the content that Committee felt that they couldn't approve the DVDs.
- c. HSE have released a report by Prof John Gunn on the Manchester Hole incident. GM has been asked by ACL and Joint Services (and BCA) to respond given that there appear to be a number of discrepancies in it. This will not be a comment on the incident.
- d. CSCC Training Officer had expressed concern that Training Committee meetings are now held midweek. However, most members of that committee now found the meetings easier to attend. Times of meetings and attendance to be kept under review.
- e. AALA new format, very little changed apart from name.

**11. Equipment Officer**

- a. GJ reported on the testing carried out after the failure of an Eco Hanger in Mendip. Apparently the hanger had been installed through flowstone and mud and was only partially installed in rock. This has highlighted the need to review the installation and testing documentation which is currently written as guidelines. It will be much more prescriptive in future.
- b. A batch of "Singing Rock" anchors have been tested using the recommended resin and found to fail at a lower load. Another series of tests are scheduled using the "old" resin. A new source of Eco hangers has been identified in China and these will need to be tested. The Eco hangers may be better as this type is stronger and familiar to BCA.
- c. Minutes from Equipment Committee meetings are required for BCA archives / Web page
- d. Consultation document on anchor placement. A first draft is available on the web and it has been circulated to regional reps for their equipment officers to examine. A resolution has been passed by the CSCC on the content of para. 60. This stated "The CSCC expresses total opposition to the proposal within the BCA Equipment and Techniques Committee consultation on anchor placement that requires the accreditation of



anchor placers by professionals". The document suggests that CIC holders will be paid by BCA for accrediting the riggers. CIC panel are reported not to have been approached on the need for validation of anchor places skills in SRT.

**12. Editor** not present, no report.

- a. Meeting expressed its concern that there were no newsletters. There should be four newsletters published. LW to contact JC to see if there are any problems which we can help solve and if he wants to continue as newsletter editor and give 28 day deadline for reply.

**13. Publications & Information Officer**

- a. Consideration of transferring "Lost Caves" video to DVD or possibly updating it altogether. Meeting felt that this should come under Conservation & Access. As a stopgap a DVD could be produced from the video but the master copy may not be available. The question was asked whether it was worth doing at all. LW to cost up production of DVD from video.
- b. Big thanks were expressed by the meeting for the excellent work done on the BCA handbook by DW. The handbook has been sent to DIM's etc

**14. Legal & Insurance Officer**

- a. DJ has prepared an article on the effect of the new smoke-free legislation for the newsletter. A copy of this is to be posted on the website
- b. Enquiry received from Shepton Mallet CC asking about child protection issues for 14-18 yr olds
- c. Landowner liability indemnity certificates are available from Nick Williams (or GJ) but there was a delay with them at the start of the year due to a change in wording and broker.

**OTHER REPORTS**

**15. Membership Secretary**

- a. Report circulated
- b. Problems with inaccurate data have now been solved.
- c. Getting insurance certificates out to Regional Councils and Access Control Bodies will be a priority at start of next year.
- d. EP had received an email from John Hine, querying when NORPEX would receive their BCA cards. GJ advised had been sent out yesterday.
- e. Article on membership is to be included in the Dec newsletter along with AGM papers
- f. Meeting expressed appreciation at publication of list of member clubs etc.
- g. Devon Mining Club have enquired about getting a discount as they are not a caving club. GJ to write back pointing out that insurance is a benefit of membership of BCA and if they don't want to join BCA then we will refund their insurance contribution. BCA policy is that Mining Groups must be members of BCA to get any of the benefits of membership. Any groups who don't want membership can have a refund of monies paid so far.
- h. There is currently a delay of at least 1 week on paper information etc. that goes to Great Hucklow before it gets to GJ. There is a big issue with DIM's as GJ sometimes doesn't get information for up to 6 weeks. There is a plan to get this delay down to 10 days by scanning paperwork and forwarding on to GJ immediately.
- i. BCRA Honorary Members. Existing Hon. Members to have BCA Honorary membership extended to them. Further applications for Hon. BCA membership must be put before a council meeting. MD to draft letter to BCRA setting out this position

**16. Insurance Manager** not present, no report

**17. Convenor, Radon Working Party**

- a. Updated "Radon Underground" currently with BM from whom feedback is awaited. This will be published electronically.

**18. National Cave Registry Co-ordinator**

- a. Things are progressing. Cwmbran Cave registry have sent some test data to DC

**19. International Representative**

- a. EP reported that Ged Campion, Vice-President of the Speleological Federation of the European Union (FSUE), had attended the German congress from 17-20 May 2007.
- b. Ged Campion has agreed to try and promote Vercors 2008 to UK cavers
- c. Ged Campion advised EP that he is hoping to go to a FSUE meeting next year and to let him know if there are any issues that the SCA would like raised
- d. EP reported that 13 representatives from the UK had attended the UIS Cave Rescue Conference in Hungary from 15-18 May 2007 and that apart from the hosts, they were the biggest group.

**20. Youth & Development Officer**

**21.** BCA presence being organised at Cliffhanger Event at Sheffield.

**22.** Try Caving events have had mixed responses with CIC input working well but some club response being haphazard. Not much evidence whether this has been cost effective and a report on outcomes would be useful

**23. Any Other Business**

- a. EP asked about feedback from the Outdoor Show and Try Caving. EP reported that the Forest of Dean clubs had ran a Try Caving weekend and took approx 25 people caving, Dudley Caving Club had taken 4 (whilst given 14 leads from the Outdoor Show, only 1 had come along to the Club and he only appeared the once and there was no response from the others).
- b. Cliffhanger - EP had spoken to Henry Rockcliffe who is organising this with SUSS and he had asked for volunteers. Four are helping from Dudley CC.
- c. Request from reporter from "Disabled and Supportive carer magazine" for info on opportunities for caving etc. for disabled people. GM to reply.
- d. GM tendered his resignation from NCP
- e. Porth-yr-Ogof, representation at investigation of death. This is a purely military investigation and the representative needs to be familiar with Porth yr Ogof and independently verifiable as a competent caver. CICs from area were recommended but were rejected. Another CIC was unable to attend for the whole 5 days and was only expected to interpret information rather than give expert opinion.
- f. NCA trustees. Close to completing. DC pursuing and will contact Pete Mellors.
- g. Welsh Sports Council have decided that the Safety grant and expedition grant will now be managed by the Welsh Sports Association. This is likely to slow down process due to admin now being done by limited staff. WSA based in Cardiff. Grants available for anyone with Welsh parentage or who has lived in Wales for 12 months in the last 2 years.
- h. Employment contracts have been sent to NW by EP. Copies ought to go into records.
- i. MD to send copies of "Manual of Operations" to SF

**24. Date of next meeting**

The next Council meeting will be on 13 October 2007 at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch at 10:30 am.

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