

Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 7th January 2017
at The Red Lion Inn, Alvechurch

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE):	BCA Chairman
Robin Weare (RW):	BCA Acting Treasurer
Simon Brooks (SJB):	BCA Secretary
Nigel Ball (NB):	BCA Training Officer
Andrew Hinde (AH):	BCA Cons. & Access Officer
Nick Williams (NW):	BCA Equip. & Tech. Officer
Bob Mehew (BM):	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Les Williams (LW):	BCA Public & Information Officer
Dave Tyson (DT):	CCC Rep.
Alan Butcher (AB):	CSCC Rep.
Jenny Potts (JP):	DCA Rep.
David Jean (DJ):	DCUC Rep.
Stephan Natynczuk (SN):	ACI Rep.
Steve Holding (SH):	NAMHO Rep.
Graham Mollard (GM):	Chair QMC
Idris Williams (IW):	Club Rep 3 (2016 – 18)
Matt Wire (MW):	DIM / CIM Rep. 3 (2016 – 18)
Peter Hall (PH):	DIM / CIM Rep (2016 – 18)
Rostam Namaghi (RN):	BCA Youth & Development Officer
Stuart France (SF)	Observer
Richard Vought (RV)	Observer
Leanne Barrett (LB)	BCA Clerical Assistant

The meeting commenced at 10:30am

1. Chairperson's Welcome

AE welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: David Cooke, Martell Baines, John Gunn, John Hine, Ged Campion, Faye Litherland, Alan Finch, Tony Radmall, Bernie Woodley and Tim Allen.

3. Minutes of last Council Meeting on 1st October 2016.

The minutes were accepted as a true and correct record with the following amendments

- Action 183. Tim Allen was not going to put a properly worded proposal together with reference to section 4.6. This was being dealt with by the executive
- Bottom of page 7 – Insurance - NW has stated that insurance reserve should be 2 times and not 4 times value..

Minutes to be amended, as above and signed off.

4. Matters arising for the Minutes of the last Council Meeting

Action 36 (Manual of Operations): SJB liaising with Damian and others – work ongoing **ACTION SJB et al.**

Action 151 (Investigate Social Media) SJB and DC had not yet met to look at this. Hellie Brooks removed from working party. Ongoing. **ACTION SJB & DC**

Action 157 (Set up Auto-Enrolment Pension): On target for April 2017. Closed

Action 175 (Advice to ACB): Had been circulated to some. SJB had not realised ACB's could also include individuals and caving clubs. SJB to circulate more widely and to upload document to BCA Website. **Action SJB**

Action 176 (Training): Ongoing – See Training officers Report. Noted that item had been presented to Council some while ago but has apparently been overlooked. GM to resend and matter to be an agenda item at next meeting. **ACTION: GM/SJB**

Action 177 (Data Protection & Collecting Data on Age): Mechanism in place to collect year of birth data. Closed

ACTION 179 (Circulation of updated council membership list). Error in send this out. Would be updated and circulated as agreed. **ACTION: SJB**

ACTION 180 (Mention of revised fees in Newsletter): Fees outlined in N/L as agreed. Closed

ACTION 181 (Access and Conservation Items for Descent): Article submitted to Descent as agreed. AH thanked. Closed

ACTION 182 16. Radon Working Party Convenor's Report: Removed from Agendas. Closed

ACTION 183 (Proposed motion Ref Constitution Section 4.6): Now part of ACTION 184. Closed.

ACTION 184 (Constitutional Amendments) V2 sent out by mistake (Apologies from SJB) and, following meeting, V3 Document(s) outlining proposed changes would be circulated and responses in writing requested before end of Jan 2017. These would be taken into account and presented at March 2017 Council Meeting for consideration at 2017 AGM. **ACTION: Executive**

ACTION 185 (Caving/BCA Leaflets for Show Caves): Produced and distributed as agreed. Response positive and uptake good. BM thanked for his work. Closed.

ACTION 186 (Additional BCA Information Leaflets): See BM Report Ongoing. **ACTION: BM**

ACTION 187 (Individual Caving Rep for CNCC); Rep identified. Closed

5. Chairpersons Report

First of all, I should like to wish everybody a very Happy New Year. I wonder whether 2017 will be quite as interesting and unpredictable as 2016, both on international politics and caving politics? There are a number of milestone events taking place which should be good for BCA and caving in general. I hope everybody has the AGM weekend in their diaries which will take place at the Rotary Centre, Castleton on the weekend of June 9th to 11th.

I should like to thank Leanne for the minutes of the last meeting. Considering it was her first meeting, although a number of us did make some changes to her draft, the original was however very good, well done Leanne.

A number of things worth mentioning in my report, in no particular order. We have met with our insurance company Perkins Slade and the insurance continues into next year at the same rate as previously, although they made a slight increase due to insurance tax going up. The brokers are very keen on covering expeditions into the future and work is progressing, trying to get a viable scheme together, but it is still work in progress.

Graham Mollard is working on his revision of the BCA training scheme and as such a meeting with potential suppliers of a new IT system will have taken place the day before this council meeting, so I am sure Graham will report back from that.

Euro Speleo finances are nearly finalised with a virtual break-even which is good, and again compliments and thanks to everybody concerned.

Constitutional changes are being progressed and a draft will be presented at this council meeting.

Bob Mehew continues excellent work with a number of new BCA leaflets and in view of the number of things that have happened in the sports world, a review of BCA's policy towards its younger members is being undertaken.

The caving library at Glutton Bridge continues to grow and become more relevant to the caving population. Digitising of the material is progressing and is of course a massive job. Many thanks to the people involved in that. Talking of massive jobs, thanks must go to Tony Waltham in his production of Caves & Karst of the Yorkshire Dales with a second volume nearly complete and should be produced in paper form this spring.

Work on conservation and access continues to progress and this coming year will see some interesting developments.

Finally, I should like to announce that I am organising a weekend at the Royal Geographical Society to showcase British caving discoveries both at home and abroad over the last 25 years. This will take place at the Royal Geographical Society over the weekend of 1st to 4th of December 2017. It will consist of a public lecture on the Friday evening, jointly organised by ourselves and the Royal Geographical Society. Lectures all day Saturday and Sunday and an RGS Fellows Lecture on the Monday evening in their normal Fellows Lectures programme. Initially I was going to organise this purely in my own name, but on reflection I would very much like to do it in conjunction with BCA and BCRA. Do I have council's approval that this is okay?

AE Further added that the only thing like to mention is last paragraph as he is organising a weekend at the Royal Geographical Society in September. It has been done before and now

have their co-operation. Was going to do it without BCA banner but would like to do it under BCA banner unless anyone against it? Better for BCA and BCRA unofficially seem keen.

LW asked what is in between the lectures on Friday and Monday. AE explained that the Friday and Monday have framework: Friday public lecture have to pay to go to and RGS get revenue. Saturday and Sunday are days of our lectures to whoever but detail not been finalised.

LW questioned if BCA have to build two day lecture programme. AE requested the help of everyone and has given as much information as have. Milestone was getting RGS to agree to it. Will have meeting soon. BCRA keen. Will be showcasing British caving over last 25 years. Will circulate information. Conservation and access will have to be reasonable element within lectures

Proposal: For the RGS weekend to be under the BCA and probably BCRA banner.

LW Proposed. AH seconded. Unanimously agreed.

ACTION 188: AE to attend, Co-ordinated and report back. **ACTION AE.**

6. Secretary

Since the last council meeting in October 2016 my time as Secretary has focused on the following:

- *Ongoing familiarization with the Secretarial role and BCA Policies and Procedures (Still a way to go!)*
- *Supporting the new BCA Admin Assistant (Leanne) in her role.*
- *Updating the Manual of Operations (along with other action items)*

The Executive has met on 2 occasions (8/11 and 13/12 to discuss, review and progress work on: Proposed constitutional changes and amendments, BCA financial matters, Training, Training Committees and Training Admin Software, Insurance and the 2017 AGM

AE confirmed that LB has no internet connection. DC to link in with LB for website maintenance in the meantime. AE confirmed they have talked about constitutional changes and asked if there is anything more anyone wants to add?. There were no further comments.

7. Treasurer

Bank Deposit Accounts

Shortly after the last Council meeting I received a letter from Barclays advising that the interest rate on our bank deposit account would be reduced from 1.34% to zero from 5th December 2016.

A review of past minutes established that a decision taken by Council in October 2012 had not been acted upon and the Executive concluded that it had authority to research and open deposit accounts provided they were within the parameters set out in that resolution which reads:

“that PI be authorised to review options to spread the risk and increase the return on the Reserves and reallocate accordingly, subject to confirmation by Executive. Such reallocation should be subject to FSCS cover and with providers who are judged to be suitably creditworthy.”

Within those criteria accounts have now been opened by making deposits as follows:

Cambridge & Counties Bank - £70,000 for 1 year at 1.4%

Secure Trust Bank - £70,000 at 120 days notice at 1.25%

Mansfield Building Society - £50,000 at 30 days notice at 1.25%

Each account has been set up with repayment only to the main BCA account at HSBC.

My strategy will be to keep a close eye on interest rate movements and change accounts as necessary. It is likely that should this become necessary it will be at relatively short notice so I would ask Council to renew the authority to do so by approving the following proposal

That the Executive be authorised to review options to spread the risk and maximize the return on the Reserves and reallocate or renew bank deposits as and when they consider necessary. Any such reallocation should be subject to FSCS cover, repayable only to another BCA bank account and with providers who are judged to be suitably creditworthy.

Pension Scheme

We are required to offer our employees auto enrolment to a pension scheme from 1st April 2017.

Paul Ibberson, Nick Williams and I were tasked with conducting the necessary research and to recommend a scheme. We concluded that the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) scheme should be the recommended scheme.

NEST is run by a non-departmental public body and accountable to Parliament through the Department for Work and Pensions. It is completely free for employers to use. There are no set up charges and there is no charge for ongoing administration. We consider it to be positive that NEST pots travel with the member as this means we'll have no ongoing responsibility for the retirement pots of workers who leave our employment.

Following a proposed change to legislation our contributions are likely to be 2% from April 2017 and 3% from April 2018, dependent on employee eligibility and earnings.

We recommend that the British Caving Association should set up scheme with NEST and ask that Council approves the following proposal

That a pension scheme be set up with the National Employment Savings Trust in order to fulfil the legal requirement to offer our employees auto enrolment to a pension scheme. That the Acting Treasurer be authorised to take such steps as are necessary to establish the scheme and as are necessary to offer auto enrolment to our employees before 1st April 2017 and to operate the scheme thereafter.

Independent Examiner

The post was left vacant at the Annual General Meeting but I am pleased to report that Heather Simpson has agreed to accept the appointment for a further year and, accordingly, I ask that Council approves the following proposal

That Heather Simpson be appointed as Independent Examiner for the 2016 Accounts

Regional Councils

The Finance Committee (which consists of the BCA & Regional Treasurers) has considered but not yet finally agreed the Regional Councils' claims for 2015. In order to assist their cash flow I have, with the agreement of the other members of the Executive, made payments on account of those claims.

Budgets

The budget for 2016 was set to include a break even situation for Training. This was based on the detailed budgets which had been provided to me a few days before the last council meeting. It was only during that meeting that I discovered that there was a plan to upgrade the management of the training scheme which involves expenditure which was not included in those budgets. Subsequent enquiry has convinced me that some of the expected savings in other areas which were included in that budget were contingent on the expenditure which was not taken into account. Whilst it remains possible that Training will break even in 2016 I must report that I am no longer confident of this.

Looking ahead

During the next few months much of my available time will be taken with the 2016 year end process and the preparation and scrutiny of the accounts. It will greatly assist with this task if outstanding invoices and claims relating to 2016 could be chased up if necessary and submitted without delay.

Proposal: That the Executive be authorised to review options to spread the risk and maximize the return on the Reserves and reallocate or renew bank deposits as and when they consider necessary. Any such reallocation should be subject to FSCS cover, repayable only to another BCA bank account and with providers who are judged to be suitably creditworthy.

RW – proposed.

JP – seconded

Unanimously agreed

ACTION 189: Executive empowered to move funds as required. **ACTION: Executive**

NW suggested it is recorded in the minutes who is signatory on what accounts as we need to be protected. RW confirmed that signatories on 2 or 3 are the executive. Feeling that NW is a signatory on Secure Trust Bank with SJB or AE and RW. Other two SJB or AE and RW. NW replied that when he tried to do a similar exercise it was difficult with Barclays as each council member was a person of interest. RW confirmed that he hasn't been asked for that. RW did research and found 3 best accounts that could and split amounts so within government guaranteed limits on each account: intend to keep below that limit on each account in future. Expect will be topping up Mansfield account as soon as more money comes in from subs. - then use that one as feeder account back into the main account. RW confirmed that the important control is that each account is set up so that repayment is only to the main account. This was done with authority and should be in minutes from a few years

ago. Executive want council to know what going on and approve changes as and when it becomes appropriate.

Post meeting update: The signatories on the three new accounts are any two of

Secure Trust Bank: Robin Weare, Simon Brooks, Nick Williams

Cambridge & Counties Bank: Robin Weare, Simon Brooks, Andy Eavis

Mansfield Building Society: Robin Weare; Simon Brooks, Andy Eavis

RW then discussed the pensions scheme (ACTION 157). Chose government nest scheme which has the benefit of being free and government backed. Up to the point where have to 'press button' and RW wanted council authority before did so.

Proposal – That a pension scheme be set up with the National Employment Savings Trust in order to fulfil the legal requirement to offer our employees auto enrolment to a pension scheme. That the Acting Treasurer be authorised to take such steps as are necessary to establish the scheme and as are necessary to offer auto enrolment to our employees before 1st April 2017 and to operate the scheme thereafter.

RW – proposed

LW – seconded

Unanimously agreed

ACTION 190: RW given authority to act (as above) **ACTION RW**

RW stated BCA pension likely to come to about £300 a year. Will go up a little next year but is included within the budget.

Proposal - that Heather Simpson be appointed as independent examiner for the 2016 accounts.

RW proposed BM seconded.

Unanimously agreed.

RW stated he had started the Regional Council reimbursement process about a month ago, still ongoing but have, with executive approval, made on account payments to other councils to cover agreed portions. Hopefully will all be sorted soon.

JP asked if reissued guidelines. RW stated they were sent at end of November when started process and on the website; have almost new collection of treasurers. JP questioned if it would be appropriate to arrange something like Webex meeting of treasurers to clarify points? RW responded that have made a few suggested changes and it is all in hand.

JP stated that she has DCA treasurer coming to her for advice.

RW: 2016 budget was presented in October meeting, incorporating a break-even situation for training. Only later in that meeting was it discovered that training had a plan to spend £5k on outside scheme. Merely reporting that with the proposed expenditure no longer convinced they will break even.

RW asked council if anyone knows of anything outstanding from last year to be paid or claimed to ensure gets through as soon as possible so can get accounts out of the way.

8. Conservation & Access Officer.

An Educational Strategy for the Conservation of Caves

This document has been sent to Descent magazine for inclusion in a future edition. It has also been published on the Darkness Below Website.

Conservation Posters

*Several University Caving Clubs submitted entries to the **UK Caving** Cave Conservation Poster Competition. It was clear from the standard of entries that CHECC has embedded the conservation message throughout its membership. Some of the entries deserve wider circulation and I would like to propose that a small amount of money is made available to assist in redrafting and publication.*

Conservation Signage

The C&A Committee have discussed the need for conservation messages to be made available to all cave visitors at some specific “cave entrance/car park areas”. This is best done by the Regional Caving Councils. I would like to propose that applications from RCC’s for signage should be 50% funded by BCA where no other partner organisation is forthcoming. Signage in National Parks is closely controlled and does not come cheap (typically £750-£1000). YDNP has agreed to co-finance some conservation and interpretation signs at key sites in the Dales. Thanks to Tim Allen for pursuing this initiative. We are particularly concerned about heavily used sites with large numbers of novices and casual visitors who are not reached through conventional caving networks.

Caving Codes and Guidelines

I will have a box of posters and leaflets available for further distribution at the Council Meeting. I am particularly keen to see more of these posters in pubs and shops in the caving areas.

AH commented that a couple of sections in report that require approval (or not) about spending money. Conservation posters aren’t ready for issue but talent there and need to get on with it. Message is well embedded across organisations. Spend some money and get some good impact from them.

RW confirmed there is a budget and made a general comment to everyone: if Council members have thoughts/proposal regarding the use of funds if they can let RW have something in advance of meeting, he can look up budget situation and come to meeting more informed.

AE asked RW if figure against Conservation & Access to let AH know what it is so knows what can spend.

ACTION: 191: RW to advise AW. AW to action spend if funds allow. **ACTION: RW/AW**

AH: other area of money well spent on signage at caves. Each region has honey pot cave that isn’t educated through normal caving communities. Often find a regional partner to produce a sign appropriate for their site. National park agreed to co-fund signs at sites where not just caving clubs, but visiting clubs and let them know caves valuable. Not suggesting kind of signage – come could be simple and others have full interpretation.

RC: have something that want help funding with if can’t get help locally then BCA should be in position to help out? JP stated that the national trust can be useful.

AH asked if can't get another partner to help out? National Parks were discussed as a possible option.

RW confirmed each Regional Council has a Conservation & Access budget for spending. Procedure is that each Regional Council can spend on self-authorisation: up to £500 in a year.

AH stated that this time last year Bradford pot hole club did major cleaning operation where around 20 spent the full day in there after training now not a single mark in entire cave: shows effectiveness of taking away image of graffiti being acceptable.

ACTION 192: AH will write short item on conservation for newsletter. **ACTION: AH.**

9. Equipment & Techniques Officer

A meeting of the E+T Committee was held by Webex on 1 December. Current hot topics include:

- Continuing use of bolt tester to confirm performance of commercial anchors, HCR anchors and use in substrates other than limestone*
- Loose anchors and how to deal with them*
- Anchor placement records*
- Further supplies of 316 anchors*
- Extraction of anchors and replacement in the same holes*

AE asked if 316 is latest type of anchor? NW confirmed latest type of steel and best between cost and effectiveness. Old marine grade: looking at HCR newer materials becoming more common but without getting into detailed metallurgy need to know using right material. Not convinced titanium right material if anyone questions.

a. Rope Test

A few samples have been received but not tested owing to other commitments. Otherwise nothing to report.

10. Training Officer

The following data for the BCA professional qualifications is from August 2016 to November 2016.

<i>Local Cave Leader registrations:</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Local Cave Leader Level 1 assessments:</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Local Cave Leader Level 2 assessments:</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Local Cave Leader Level 1 revalidations:</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Local Cave Leader Level 2 revalidations:</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Local Cave and Mine Leader Core Skill Reassessments Level 1:</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Local Cave and Mine Leader Core Skill Reassessments Level 2:</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Cave Instructor Certificate registrations:</i>	<i>8</i>

<i>Cave Instructor Certificate assessments:</i>		0
<i>Cave Instructor Certificate revalidations:</i>		4
<i>Current Local Cave Leader Award holders:</i>	<i>Level 1</i>	474
	<i>Level 2</i>	270
<i>Cave Instructor Certificate holders:</i>		79

NB: 30/08 – 31/11 schemes still progressing. Level 1 still more popular than level 2. 79 CIC holders.

GM confirmed yearend figures similar to years before. RW stated that on a par with year before but down on year before that. He sees the figures regularly and been meaning to ask around 700 LCLMA holders as we don't seem to have an appropriate number of revalidations for these people. Revalidate? NB confirmed supposed to be every 5 years. NW stated that people in that scheme don't stay in very long.

11. Publications & Information officer

LW confirmed no written report.

a. Webmaster

12. Website

I've updated the membership section for 2017, I've also restructured it so that it more logical and easier to navigate. Quite a bit of the website could benefit from a similar exercise. I would like to remind Officers that they can update virtually any part of the website themselves. If you see something that can be improved whether in your section or not, please do so.

Work on a new Try Caving website continues behind the scenes.

Web Services

In the last quarter there was 1 unscheduled outage of approx. 4 hours. In a separate incident the email service was unavailable for approx. 3 hours. Regrettably a server upgrade also caused problems for two of our accounts but they were resolved within 24 hours. And finally two other accounts were compromised by hackers. So an eventful time but even so the uptime remains a respectable 98.99%.

IT Working Party

Glenn Jones, Dave Gibson and myself have updated the membership systems to collect Year of Birth data. So far this year 33% of CIMs and 64% of DIMs are providing a YoB. Training have purchased some software called Tahdah to handle the administration of the training scheme. A lot has gone wrong in the procurement process that I hope the Executive will look at to ensure that the errors are not repeated. The purchase cost of Tahdah is £5000 in the first year then £4320/yr thereafter (inc VAT). This is the biggest IT purchase that BCA has ever made and the IT Working Party were not consulted. As such, important questions about the purchase were not asked of the supplier leaving BCA open to various issues including unexpected costs and loss of control of our data.

Tahdah has been developed for/by Mountain Training. I've not seen a demo but from what I have seen it looks well written. BCA would be the third or fourth user. The biggest risk is that the software will need altering to suit Training's needs. Bespoke work costs £900/day.

Given Training's financial performance in recent years, its failure to meet its target of being cost neutral to BCA, there can be negligible budget for any extra work. A justification for the cost has been increased revenue from a better retention rate of award holders. I spoke to a well know Mendip CIC to get a view from the "customers" side. He liked the idea of Tahdah but didn't think that it would improve retention rates. The real problem is that there are too few revalidation courses and they are invariably in another part of the country. It simply needs to be easier and less bureaucratic to revalidate. How about a logbook review and interview; if necessary via video conference? Because I've not been sufficiently involved in the process I'm still not in a position to recommend one way or the other. If forced to make a recommendation today based on what I know so far, Tahdah looks like a good solution but my gut feeling is that risk of additional costs, that Training can't afford, is too great. The possible in-house solutions have not been fully explored.

LW stated that the information on website needs to be maintained: someone taking on "Try-Caving" website and DC has responded and will come back to Gary. AH: if Gary doesn't get on it soon then window will be missed. LW confirmed that DC responded as above and he's dealing with it. PH mentioned that CNCC website and BCA website difference is massive. CNCC website has moved forward so Gary is capable of putting together a good website.

a. Newsletter Editor

The last newsletter was distributed at the end of October as an e-mail attachment to those registered to receive it and it appeared on the BCA website at the same time.

I'm hoping to finalise the next newsletter during the third weekend of January and would ask for contributions to reach me by Thursday 19th.

On this occasion these deadlines are absolute as the newsletter must be completed in time to Cookie to distribute it before he leaves for Meghalaya.

I record my gratitude to those who have already responded to my pre-Christmas appeal for content.

RW: Nothing to add other than DC is going away in February and as he is needed to send it out The cutoff date is absolute. Content needed.

b. Handbook Editor

ACTION 193: LB to take this item out of future agendas.

ACTION: LB/SJB

13. Legal & Insurance Officer

A substantially revised draft document for Access Controlling Bodies was produced and passed to Nick Williams for consideration.

A very useful technical note has been produced by P Thorne on the safety of man ridding winches used in accessing mines. Thanks go to P Thorne for his work. A meeting of NAMHO's Council was attended to discuss the topic. Consideration is being given to holding a meeting with representatives from clubs who deploy winches to discuss the topic.

14. Youth & Development Officer

RN apologised for not circulating report beforehand. Paraphrased report: Begin of calendar year 4 student clubs had single digit membership. Liable to not renew following year. ¾ have had large intake and peer to peer support. One initiative of training trainers; couldn't get numbers required signed up at different events but will try and pursue again this year. Given advice to certain student clubs about risk assessments. Irish university club were having dispute with union about qualifications and insurance – offered to write something in support but found work-around with Irish cave rescue with peer review of leadership system. (Southern Ireland) Been in touch with SUI. Main issue that SUI weren't convening near enough to time to have co-ordinated response.

SJB asked what clubs needed support on? RN confirmed they wouldn't go as far as to provide training. SJB clarified that the reason he asks is there was a request earlier in year for college based club running a taster session; wanted help and asked generally how dealt with response - go to local caving club? How would BCA assure that someone from local caving club would be competent.

GM confirmed that the professional side have continually offered free training to trainers and university clubs: always rejected by latter.

RN: on subject of training; student training has improved in last few years. Northern and Southern CHECC improved, cave rescue too. Impressed on grass route development, but also legacy of starting up CHECC and cementing informal networks. One action point was guide to student clubs. Will update and recirculate. Was push to try and start research groups but hasn't happened because couldn't find anyone to undertake project. Have caving club handbook, rather than providing technical advice. Not published yet - produced by BCA

RW confirmed this need to be approved before publication.

RN: can ask CHECC to take over policy if that's preferred? Project going on in CHECC of trying to identify mountaineering clubs in universities to see if want to expand into caving / restart in some areas (Swansea and Lancaster).

15. Membership Administrator Report

BCA Membership to 31st December 2016

DIMs 557 (caving), 45 (non-caving), 2 (CIM Plus), 7 (BCRA Honorary), (including 285 BCRA members and 30 student members) (Total DIM's = 611)*

CIMs 4057 (caving), 875 (non-caving), 603 student / U18) (Total CIM's = 5535)

Clubs: 174

Associates: 2

Access Bodies: 8

The CIM Plus option has been discontinued for 2017 due to low take up.

1008 new membership numbers were issued in 2016 (15837 – 16845)

New Clubs: *The following clubs have supplied the correct paperwork and payment in order to become BCA member clubs:*

Rivendell Caving Club

2017 Membership Renewal Processes: As of today (30th December 2016) the following have been processed and posted;

DIMs: 217

Groups: 28

CIMs: 439

The report was received and Glenn thanked for his comprehensive report.

BM: asked if Council should approve of Rivendale Caving Club. SJB: Replied he didn't realise that Council needed to do anything with other that take note when informed of a new member. AE; believed that the Council shouldn't just rubber stamp Rivendale. To which BM: replied that council have given precedent to rubber stamp: haven't said it needed specific information. AE: Suggested council needed more information from Glenn. BM: Commented that Council had not made that requirement before so Glenn has fulfilled what is required. SH: Noted that when talking about new clubs that no history the Council has to take them at face value and today the council does not have information given to Glenn. LW: suggested having a procedure in place where Glenn is approached and he has authorisation to allow them to join with no input from council is wrong. If Council only rubber stamping then no point in bringing to Council except for information.

Proposal: That Rivendale Membership Application be accepted, but that in future clubs are required to supply a statement of approx. 100 words describing who they are, where they are based and why they want to join BCA.

NW Proposed

LW Seconded

Unanimously agreed

ACTION 194; Secretary and NW to liaise with Glenn regarding proposal above, establish what current procedures are, establish a way forward and report back to Council at next meeting. **ACTION: SJB/GJ**

NW will ensure that Glenn is informed accordingly. SF noted that BCA has effectively 'no levers to pull on' for getting rid of errant clubs or taking action. Locally can't get rid of member club, shouldn't meddle in ACB. NW confirmed there is a procedure for expulsion under 11.2. of the constitution. Questionable what can do up to there. Work in progress.

BM: updating current disciplinary process to come into line with improvements. SF: training and education is the answer NW: Noted that BCA would still need sanction(s).

16. Insurance Managers Report

A meeting was held with Perkins Slade in December with myself and Andy Eavis attending to review the policy. Key points/outcomes were:

- *Renewal at the same price as last year although increase in IPT will increase premium slightly.*
- *PS recommended increase Loin to £10m, but BCA resisted. Will look at this again in time for decision at October meeting.*
- *Both PS and BCA happy with current arrangements/cover. No significant requests for additional cover/policy changes from BCA members.*
- *PS to promote huts policy (which should provide savings for club due to removal of duplicate POL cover) in 2017.*
- *AJE and NJW investigating travel/rescue/expedition insurance.*

- PS prepared to be very flexible with costs of training scheme professional cover to assist BCA with promoting training schemes.
- PS satisfied with current level of knowledge about property holdings by BCA clubs/ACB's but would like to keep pressure on to ensure information is comprehensive and accurate.
- PS broadly satisfied with BCA proposals for risk assessment. Need to find acceptable balance between need for documented assessments and bureaucratic overhead.
- Brexit impact unclear but PS expect to be able to continue to support SUI in any event.

LW asked if the expedition insurance is a work in progress? NW confirmed it is looking good for Q2 2017.

SN questioned the thinking of not going to £10 million NW: would increase premium a lot with not much gain. Perkins Slade (PS) did say would ensure we have a price for October. Need to see some pressure from Club and Regional Council membership to say that £10 million is worth paying for because not getting access to sites or carrying risk in certain sites. Will increase indemnity limit for events when needed. PS are of view that if someone has accident and has dependants that would require to be paid out then could go over limit but don't have to act on their recommendation. 5 million is appropriate and in a few years' time, 10 may be. Have to bear in mind in 2-3 years of no claims then the cost of going to 10 would be lower. 10 million is a common limit.

SF stated that NRW were comfortable for 5m., but BCA policy was annual so if 2 incidents it could be wiped out. Local thought is that access agreement is suspended until know outcome of the claim. NW: if what want me to do is this time next year have conversation with insurance that don't want to increase indemnity but number of claims to be increase. May be a much cheaper way of doing it.

NW confirmed at this point that the insurance amounts from earlier in the meeting is each and every loss annually. Product liability aggregate total year.

17. Cave Registry Co-Ordinators Report

Nothing to report

18. British Caving Library Report

The last of the material from the John Beck / Doug Nash legacy has now been moved to the British Caving Library and new shelving has been installed to cope with the influx, bringing the total length of shelving for publications to around 250m, the maximum we have room for. The work of cataloguing these additional publications continues but it will be some time before all are in their proper places on the shelves.

This material also includes more than 1000 surveys and maps, mostly of Peak District sites. Some of these are contained in 2 map-chests, which are now installed at the Library (in addition to the 4 we already had). The sorting, identifying and cataloguing of all these unlisted survey/map items is particularly time-consuming and we shall have to be innovative in creating suitable storage for a hundred or so large cardboard tubes, each of which contains several items too large for map-chests rolled together. With the help of a volunteer we are identifying from among these a number of Peak District master survey transparencies, which had originally been given to John Beck for safe-keeping by the surveyors. We intend

to collaborate with D.C.A. and the surveyors involved in order to put these master surveys onto DCA's website where they will be accessible to interested cavers, an idea which was under discussion with John himself before he died two years ago.

19. Child Protection Officer Report

Following the recent news from the footballing world, a review of the current policy last updated in 2013 is being started. Initial consideration suggests that the policy needs to be amended to make clear it covers both vulnerable adults as well as under children & young persons whilst the guidance needs wide revision including introducing the topic of a moral duty to report concerns of potential abuse.

A discussion followed about who would report any potential instances or problems and BM stated that any comments on the existing policy would be welcomed. BM confirmed he isn't aware of anything that has been reported. We have a policy and guidance notes that doesn't say anything about it.

DT stated that each year they get grant from Sport Wales and paperwork asks for statements such as child protection statement. Spoken before and most clubs don't have a child protection officer: they insist that a parent or guardian goes with the child. A few club huts do allow children in but generally kept in separate areas and most clubs avoid problems in first place.

BM: existing guidelines gives little information on using parent or guardian. Also worries what is the responsibility and duties of child protection officer as may have to ensure that any children attending a BCA event are adequately protected.

Discussion continued that the policy needs to be realistic: if let hut out how do protect it? Ensure person who is using it has responsibility.

SJB: regarding reporting - Most local authorities have MASH (Multi Agency Services Hub) with a 24/7 help-line that individuals can contact (without revealing their identity if desired) to share concerns get advice. Information/concerns can then be flagged relevant authorities. Local authority website will outline contact numbers.

AE questioned what action is wanted from this discussion.

SF: look at BMC guidelines and how to operate with child protection in them: don't allow under 18s to join and if bring them along have to be under their supervision

ACTION: 195 BM : Review ongoing and Council members invited to let BM have any information/comments can items can come back to March meeting for consideration/action, as required. **ACTION BM and Council Members**

20. Crow-Liaison Officers Report

Following the last meeting I received new guidelines for the CRoW campaign from the exec. There seems little that I can do alone pending the 4.6 constitution changes so have no progress to report. I repeat the sentiments I made in my statement to council at the previous meeting and urge council to remember the clear mandate given by it's members in the poll.

I have assisted the C&A officer on a number of conservation initiatives and will continue to do so should he require my help. I am unable to do much to improve landowner relations in

the regions due to BCA restraints, especially on Mendip where many of the problems with CRoW has been reported. Could CSCC report on what progress they have made in allaying the landowner fears they were concerned about? It may be helpful to other regions.

AH: like to put vote of thanks to TA for incredible amount of work. Getting conservation message out. SJB: Reminded Council that item 4.6 is being addressed as part of constitutional changes

21. International UIS (Including FSE) Officers Reports

At the moment, it is a relatively quiet time within the UIS, building up to the International Congress in Sydney Australia from 23rd to 30th July 2017, please get your flight booked, there are some reasonable deals going on at the moment; return UK to Sydney for not much over £500 is possible.

One thing that the UIS have been busy on is their proposal for a UNESCO year of Caves. The idea is for 2021 to be designated as a year to celebrate everything to do with caves and caving, particularly cave conservation. A huge amount of work has been put into this, but it is now possible that it may be changed to an annual day of caves, which if it happens every year, may potentially be a better option and appears to be easier to get approved by the various international organisations.

The only international meeting I have attended since Euro Speleo in August was the final day of the International Show Caves Association meeting in Muscat in Oman on 13th November. This event was attended by 40 show cave operators from all around the world, and as ever with these events, proved to be very productive at sharing ideas on show cave development and management. Currently there is a great deal of discussion about the codes of practice on show caves, largely, to do with conservation, although I think people could be seen to talking about closing the door after the horse has bolted, it seems to me to be a step in the right direction and good things are being said.

I urge everybody to look at the UIS website which includes a lot of international information with a lead to their regular publication of the UIS bulletin.

FSE Report – Ged Champion

I missed the deadline for submission of reports to council last time so this is an update includes the most salient points from the August General Assembly Meeting (GAM).

FSE Membership

The FSE currently represents 30 signed up member countries and 17 countries were in attendance or represented at the GAM at Eurospeleo in the Yorkshire Dales in August.

Monaco, Albania, Turkey, and Spain have made no payment for 2016 but it is hoped these payments will follow soon.

Regarding prospective members, Georgia has submitted an application for FSE membership.

The situation in Spain is now resolved. The former federation FEE legally ceased to exist in 2015. Two new speleological organizations were founded in Spain: ASEDEB and CEC. Representatives of CEC joined the 2016 GAM and reported about their organization: CEC has bought the library, archives and the trademarks of FEE. It represents 11 of the 13 Spanish regions. About 7.600 Spanish cavers were said to be members of CEC, which represents about 80% of the Spanish caving community.

Information & Publicity.

The FSE Facebook page, updated regularly by Henk Goutier, is continuously visited by thousands of cavers and non-cavers thus representing an excellent outreach for European speleology. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/eurospeleo>. Also, with the help of our partners of the WikiCaves organization we are able to update the FSE website on a regular basis.

The work of the ECPC commission

The FSE, through the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) is now a member of the Board of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) in Brussels and thus directly involved in the EEB decision-making. Bärbel Vogel occupies this job for the FSE. ECPC is active in the EEB workgroups "Water" and "Biodiversity". The "Nature Alert" campaign of EEB, is striving to maintain the strong European nature protection standards. ECPC was present at the EEB General Assembly in Vienna in September 2016 with a representative and an FSE/ECPC poster presentation.

The International Caving Expeditions database (ICE db)

Treasurer Henk Goutier maintains the contact with WikiCaves. The ICE db is steadily growing. The idea is to provide all speleologists with data and contact information about caving areas world-wide. This is done in collaboration with the UIS. All reports of EuroSpeleo Projects are now also available on the WikiCaves website. WikiCaves currently provides major translation assistance e.g. for the FSE Newsletter

Change of role on the FSE bureau

Vice-President Michael Laumanns (Germany) has resigned from vice president and changed to the position of Vice-Secretary which has been vacant since 2014. He is already managing the EuroSpeleo Projects, part of the vice secretary's job description anyway. This forced a vacancy for the post of FSE Vice-President. One candidature was received from Mladen Garasic (Croatia) who was elected by the GAM.

The European Cave Rescue Commission

The post of chairman of the European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC) was up for grabs. As the current ECRC chairman, Christian Dodelin, wished to stand down. Ms. Antonia Vlaykova from the Bulgarian Federation of Speleology (BFS) applied for the post. There were no other candidates the GAM elected Antonia Vlaykova for a 4-years term as ECRC chairwoman (until 2020).

Timetable of Eurospeleo events & General Assembly Meetings over next 2 years that involve the FSE.

ES Forum 16th September 2017 Ferrieres Belgium

ES Forum 2018 will be in Sazkammergut, Upper-Austria.

Ged's report – comprehensive/ NO further comments.

22. QMC Report

During the nine months since I became the Chair of the NCP and began the change process within professional caving that was much overdue much has happened.

- Council approved the split between recreational cavers and professional cavers.
- The Qualification Management Committee was set up to replace NCP and to implement the upgrade of all sections of the LCMLA and CIC schemes. The amount of work is massive but with the support of the QMC we are starting to make inroads.
- The grievance procedure is complete just awaiting acceptance of council.
- A new trainer/assessor agreement has been drawn up ensuring that T/A's will have a more professional approach to their occupation and their clients. This will include mandatory membership of the BCA. It will hopefully be operational by January 2017.

- A level one technical skills unit is virtually complete as is a conservation and access unit. All of the units which will eventually cover the whole of the LCMLA and CIC syllabuses will be available to all cavers via our digital handbook.
- I have met with Alan Butcher re the changes, all Alan appears to want is digital material being made available to all recreational cavers without the restraints of assessment. This is totally acceptable to professional cavers and will be met by producing an A4 triple fold listing all that is available where it can be found and contacts for extra help if desired. He is also against the setting up of a recreational training committee just wanting a recreational Training officer to be a point of contact and the person to handle recreational grants.
- Training Committee as it was will cease to exist on 29th September 2016.
- A great deal of research has gone into trying to find a data base that will meet our needs, MLT and several other NGB's have been using Tadah for two years. We approached them asking for a demo which they provided. It certainly seemed to meet our needs and following further research with MLT we feel it would be the correct direction to move in. In 2009 council approve the purchase of a new data base if we could find one, that we have done. As this system is totally digital it would eliminate logbooks postage, some of Mary's time and generally provide a much more professional product.
- The NGB " The British Association of Canyoning Guides " wishes to develop a new qualification with the support of AALS, this qualification will cover gorges and gills, they would like us to be very closely involved as there is a strong crossover of skills. They seek council's permission to use the BCA logo alongside their own, what we gain is an acceptance of parity with all three of our awards. Many centres offer gorge walking and it would be remiss of us to turn down this invitation to be closely involved.
- Lastly AALS put out a "qualification " earlier this year called level Zero for caves and mines with no inherent dangers and not difficulties in evacuation. This was debated at QMC and I was asked to approach AALS with the intention of possibly taking this over. They have no objections to BCA owning this qualification but they are unwilling to move on some of their criteria. However we have gained some of our points and discussions are ongoing.

As the above report did not get circulated at the last Council meeting I felt I should update what is happening in the Professional Caving sector.

- The final draft of the professional disciplinary procedure is complete and has been accepted by QMC and all but three TA,s who are considering their position/
- The new TA agreement went out early November for TA,s to sign along with the request for the new TA fee and the fee to become a sim or dim. This has been completed by all but the above three who have up till the end of January at an increased cost to complete all or cease to be TA,s.
- The above has not been an easy process but as the Treasurer made it quite plain that we had to support ourselves it had to happen.
- Recreational and professional caving have split, recreational caving require a new training officer as Nigel Ball will be TO for professional caving only.
- QMC with its new format has taken over all aspects of Professional caving, answering directly to Council.
- The new data base has still not been agreed although most who have looked at it seem to think it is more than appropriate for the job. The existing three bases no longer are a viable option.

- As soon as we get a new data base we will implement the agreed action that all CIC must be either a CIM or DIM and that all LCMLA must have a category of BCA membership to hold an award.

ACTION 196: LB to add QMC report to future agenda.

ACTION LB

GM: QMC reports are self-explanatory. Been progressing fast within QMC. Had meetings with AB about what is wanted by clubs from professional training and quite happy once get chance to produce information on a download so clubs can use it. Been looking at a new database which is overdue. Was first raised in 2010 at council but no minutes actually. Found a system believe is right for job. Visited them yesterday with AE, NW, RW and GM had a reasonably positive meeting and have asked for certain things to be produced to counter any fears and hopefully agree that executive can make decision on if can go ahead or not rather than bring to another meeting.

BM: going on what DC has written in supplement is that going to cost £5k and much of that could be recovered through subs? Not sure how would work with figures obtained from last year. Best expectation from increase in charges for schemes starting this year is £2-3k, so don't see how the money stacks up. Written report on how this new database will fund itself? Seems like a lot of expenditure.

NW stated that it's not that big a deal in finances. Not going to break BCA while find out if it works. BCA spends 10k on library and people benefit from that and think this compares with that. Allows us to maintain and take forward training programme in a way can't at the minute.

AE stated at meeting yesterday he got comfortable feeling. Expensive but will up professionalism and will be cost; most could lose is the 5k at the end of 12 months if no good.

RW stated that the main reason he went to yesterday's meeting is that he was very concerned about the financial viability of company selling system. Accounts show that the company providing the service is in the red. We were given explanations for the figures but he is reserving judgment until he has seen the full accounts but at that point if he is satisfied that the company is capable of providing long term then may well withdraw any opposition he may have to it. If so the next stage will be to go on and look in more details at financial viability of it as far as we are concerned. A lot of the saving should be in cutting Mary's hours in half. This is not going to happen in year 1 as she'll be the one doing to the work to input the system. Will increase in the first part of the period. Best hope is that her costs are going to remain about the same next year.

Discussion followed about the database: mostly in favour of BCA paying external companies for services. However, concerns were raised that contracts don't say what they will do for that money. Other companies have proposed to do this and had no response. Concerns were raised about the financial viability and ownership of the company.

NW stated that they have not gone into this without investigating from existing customers that is what said it. Financial concerns valid but RW is investigating those. 4 main points:

1. Do we need it. Without questions. Training needs database to do job
2. Is it right thing? From what seen yes, might not be only thing but will cost similar
3. Can we afford to do it? Financially yes
4. Can we get our data back if goes wrong. Assurance is that we can

Concerns were raised about the company structure and NW confirmed the agreement would be with the parent company. To alleviate concerns. MW to be involved in process. Agreed by council that want RW to be totally comfortable before going ahead – executive will be unanimous.

GM: wish to have BCA logo on British Association of Canyon Guides: similar conservation strategy.

RW: just looking at body of GM report – says says Qualifications Management Committee was set up to replace NCP – this is not correct – earlier minutes show that NCP was renamed QMC

GM: accept that. Things have overtaken

RW stated that the council needs to realise where we currently stand and where we should be going constitutionally. Firstly NCP is a sub-committee of the training committee which cannot have ceased to exist in September 2016 as it was set up by general meeting so can only be change by a general meeting. Training committee is a standing committee and as such is regulated by 7.1 – 7.4 of constitution and it is currently responsible for recreational and professional training. There seems to be a desire remove professional caving admin from the Training Committee and transfer it to a new QMC, which, confusingly, has same name as was used to rename NCP a few council meetings ago. Following a meeting in November he had circulated a memo setting out the way forward and had hoped that some action would have followed.

GM: put forward to AE and NW as changes to constitution. NW: confirmed that the Training Committee had met recently.

RW: if a change goes through to leave training committee responsible only for recreational caving it will leave professional training in limbo. He saw two ways to deal with that. Either a change to constitution to allow professional training to be set up how it wants OR see how it goes provisionally as a working group. Second idea was better accepted last time discussed. What we need from training or QMC is something in advance to council. He had hoped it would have appeared at this meeting setting out new terms of reference setting out whatever proposals going to be hoped for at the general meeting.

SN: questioned how could claim totally accepted by professional cavers – insert 'some' or delete as don't know how would know. GM confirmed it had gone out to all on list but not had response from everyone.

AB: looking back at constitutional changes it was proposed QMC want to be entirely independent of council except when trouble. Need to properly define how this committee fits into organisation or cast them adrift and let professionals do their own thing.

RW: that draft item was prepared to point out to other members of the Executive what it appeared that Training wanted to do. It shouldn't have been in document that was circulated.

GM stated that QMC want two members of council to be present. Have gone overboard in asking TAs to be full members of BCA and all those holding qualifications. Don't want to be separate. Want to stay in BCA and be a part of it however can't come to an agreement on QMC being to a certain extent self-governing with responsibility to report back to council then it's not going to happen.

LW: not in a position where special committees govern themselves. Not in constitution of BCA.

GM confirmed position of not wanting to come through training committee but come straight to council.

AE confirmed this would mean changes to constitution.

AB – Did have positive meeting. GM's item doesn't mention that recreational caving training grants should be regulated in same way as conversation: how are we with getting this organised?

GM confirmed it will be organised through new training officer for recreational caving. Don't have one currently.

Confirmed NB still training officer.

RW clarified that confirmation of this required as people who had wanted to apply for training grants weren't sure who to contact.

NB: meeting had in Great Hucklow said no longer a member of training committee but training officer of QMC. Told still required to receive applications for training grants.

LW requested clarification. Have training officer on council and constitutionally QMC doesn't exist so is NB still the training officer of BCA?

AE confirmed constitutionally still the training officer.

RW questioned the grievance procedure as the report states it is complete and awaiting council. But as far as he knows Council has not seen it. GM: should have gone out but may not have gone. SJB confirmed he has seen it but wasn't asked to approve it or circulate it and the only items he has been required to approve are the Training/QMC minutes which he does.

Discussed continued as to if comments had been incorporated. GM confirmed that some have and was put to QMC.

Proposed - that there should be a specific item at March 2017 Council meeting that is purely about disciplinary process.

Proposed BM SN seconded Agreed unanimously.

ACTION 197: SJB/LB to place matter as agenda item at March 2017 council meeting. GM to circulate draft disciplinary process etc. via Secretary **ACTION SJB/LB/GM**

Following a request from GM RW – read out 11.2 & 11.3 (then 11.1 as relevant) of the constitution regarding what action(s) BCA can take in what circumstances. GM: commented that the disciplinary procedure drawn up is much more structured and lenient than that as goes through proper investigation and hearing and then action if necessary.

23. Any Other Business

SJB: Reminded the Council they have the 'gift' to decide if they want to make decision on points raised at meetings under AOB but can't decide decline to receive/hear the items.

- a) ACB restricting access to sites to BCA Members only.

Email from TA. SJB requested council to confirm that BCA has no desire to see ACB restrict access to BCA members only.

JP: could be in position where ACB don't want to do it but land owner does. LW not sure BCA has policy on this. BM: number of situations where ACB may have no option to say it is restricted.

LW: refer to current position and if Tim wants to raise this as formal proposal then he does so.

Noted that item 4.6 of the BCA Constitution states "That the owners and tenants of property containing caves have the right to grant or withhold access." This makes no reference to whether the individual is a BCA member or not. Thus it could be assumed from this that the BCA does neither favour nor dis-favour BCA Members having access to any cave.

- b) CHECC Website.

SJB: second part of TA's email. Recognising what AH said about CHECC. Stories were inspirational. 13 clubs entered competition and gave insight to caving and recommend that council take time to look at the stories on website.

BM had one more item. At end of printed reports noted consultation from Environment Agency but wanted to bring it under AOB as he has gone to Exec to seek permission to write in name of BCA as a whole. Agreed BM write on behalf as BCA.

- c) Mine Inspections

SN: inspectorate has been a lot more active. Inspected certain mines. Closed down one that should have been defined as working mine. Visited another that people were opening up as interest. Inspector said if it had been a working mine then would have closed it. Working party from NAMHO has met with inspectors with view to redefining guidelines. One of things which are clear is existing guidelines mines inspectorate were involved in drawing up but gone through 2 generations since then amazing how little they know about mines in UK other than coal mines. Main point to note that taking interest a lot of which generated in minerals going on sale on websites. People taking them out of mines (maybe caves) and someone is doing work and they want to know about it.

DT questioned if anything said about maintenance.

SN – a lot about what is involved in a mine and what is a mine. Raised example of Milwr tunnel. Abandoned and reopened and becomes working when Water Company want to do an inspection.

24. Date, Time & Place of next meeting.

It was confirmed that the next Council Meeting would be held on 25th March, 2017 @10:30am at the Red Lion Inn, Alvechurch. The venue has been booked.

Meeting closed 15:24