



BCA Annual General Meeting 11th June 2023 at 1030

Agenda

The meeting will be held by Zoom

Copy and paste the address below into your browser, this will take you to the AGM page on the BCA website, this has the link to the meeting.

<https://british-caving.org.uk/agm-2023/>

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Apologies for Absence

Attendance and verification of Quorum

Items for AOB

Acceptance of Minutes from 2022 AGM

Proposed

Seconded

Action items and Proposals from 2022 AGM

Chair's Report to the 2023 AGM

Starting on a positive note, it is pleasing to record that membership continues to increase with around 6500 members comprising 5500 CIMs (Club Individual Members) and approximately 1000 DIMs (Direct Individual Members). An increase from 6202 at this point in 2022.

The core functions of the Association continue to function well including achievements in Youth and Development, Conservation and Access (with a new convenor), Training and Equipment, QMC, IT, Insurance and the British Caving Library (recognising the joint interests of BCA and BCRA in the Library). Our UIS and FSE

representatives have kept us well briefed on matters in the international world of caving. The Regions appears to reflect similar levels of activity.

Other functions such as the Radon WG and CRoW have experienced a natural decline in activity reflecting the current needs in these areas. Having said that, a “watching brief” has been maintained by key individuals on CRoW and it is encouraging to record a rising interest in “access” generally amongst certain of our national politicians with a potential General Election on the horizon in 2024. Rather than steal the thunder from the working groups, I’ll leave them to flesh out the details of their activity within their individual reports.

Our ability to publicise the activities within BCA, has been severely hampered by the lack of a volunteer to undertake the Publications and Information Officer’s role and our seeming inability to attract anyone into the post. We have had some help from a volunteer in this activity but on a limited basis for which I, on behalf of the Association, am very grateful for. It is not enough however and the full role would I feel, be rewarding for anyone interested in this work. Hopefully, a volunteer will come forward in time for the AGM.

Of even more pressing concern, is the Association’s Treasurer’s role as our current Treasurer, Howard Jones, is standing down after two terms of office over 5 years. To date, we have been unable to attract a volunteer to the position and approach the AGM with the headache of not having someone to undertake this vital role. However, the Executive Committee tabled a recommendation at the last Council Meeting, to separate the “booking keeping” day to day work from the Treasurer’s overall role leaving the Treasurer to deal with strategic matters and make the position more attractive for a volunteer. It is proposed that the book keeper will be paid for this work.

There are and will be more vacancies arising by the AGM as current incumbents stand down. If these are not filled after the AGM, Council will have some hard decisions to make to consider paying for key roles with a knock-on effect to overall costs and a potential associated increase in subscriptions.

I hope it does not come to that but unfortunately, interesting volunteers in helping run organisations such as the BCA, appears from anecdotal evidence, to be a familiar problem in this changing world. I hope, by the AGM, that volunteers will have come forward to help us.

Finally, on behalf of the membership, I must express our thanks and gratitude to the following outgoing members who are standing down, for their work and commitment:

Howard Jones Treasurer and Insurance Manager. My personal thanks to Howard for mentoring me through my initial period as Secretary and currently Chair, particularly when reigning me in with sound advice!

Ari Cooper-Davis IT WG convener, an unsung hero behind the scenes who keeps our IT functioning and me still oblivious as to how it all happens.

Josh White Youth and Development Officer and Group Representative who has done a sterling job in this key area judging by the feedback we have received – a hard act

to follow but not entirely lost to us, as Josh has taken on the Insurance Manager's role.

Ged Campion FSE representative who stands down as current President but has secured a position within UIS as Adjunct Secretary and will maintain our interests within that organisation in a formal sense as Andy Eavis steps aside.

Andy Eavis UIS representative is standing down from that role but has a lifetime position as a past President to keep us informed of matters on the international scene.

In addition to the above, the following positions are also vacant:

Publications and Information Officer

Group/Club Representative

There are plenty of opportunities above for volunteers to make their mark; I hope you are inspired to step forward and volunteer to help.

Russell Myers

Chair

BCA

28th May 2023

Secretaries Report

A year of the usual round of preparing the Agenda and Minutes for Council meetings, answering queries and forwarding them to the appropriate person within BCA and elsewhere.

As a member of the Executive, I have taken part in numerous discussions and decision making, helping BCA to adapt to the changing needs and requirements of the organization.

Allan Richardson

Secretary

BCA

Treasurers Report

Current bank balances: as at 24/05/2023 was £221,000. Of which £88,000 is in medium term interest bearing accounts and £77,000 is in short term deposit accounts and £56,000 on overnight deposit.

Unusual spend since last Council:

£2,500 donation to Bendrigg Trust, £3,000 donation to Ghar Parau Foundation, £1,000 settlement of 2022 BCA/BCRA account, £440 artificial cave storage, £1,100 Y&D costs,

CNCC regional claim 2022, £4,230 which included £1,766 for training expenses and £1,530 for C&A, the largest projects being White Scar and Wretched Rabbit

CSCC regional claim 2022, £5,188 the vast majority of which was for C&A projects, the largest being £3,200 at Manor Farm mine and cave.

CCC regional claim 2022, £530 of which £460 was for C&A work (DCUC regional claim received not yet paid at £174).

Note the regional claims are reviewed by BCA Finance Committee before payment.

Note any C&A project > £750 is approved in advance by BCA C&A committee

BCA Financial year end

The BCA accounts for the year ending 31/12/2022 were approved at the March 2023 BCA Council meeting, and are to be noted at this AGM. I subsequently thanked the independent reviewer and submitted the BCA tax return to HMRC. No tax was payable as I utilised losses brought forward plus charitable donations in the year

Forecast 2023

BCA Council March 2023 approved a budget for the year showing a deficit of £10k. They decided not to raise fees for 2024 to address this deficit. They then approved non budgeted expenditure of £2,500, hence the deficit will be higher than budget, all else being equal.

BCA Book Keeper

BCA Council have approved the creation of a staff role BCA Book keeper. This role will allow the BCA finance function to continue in the event of Council not having a volunteer treasurer and continues the move towards admin work being done by paid staff. The role is small and unattractive in itself; however an existing BCA staff member has agreed to be mentored by Howard Jones for the next 12 months before including the role in her other BCA duties. So following the AGM and with approval from BCA Council, Howard Jones (having retired as BCA Treasurer) will be paid book keeper on a nominal wage whilst mentoring the hopefully full time staff member. Any new BCA treasurer can therefore concentrate on the Political, Executive and Council remit and not have to do the book keeping admin.

Howard Jones BCA Treasurer (2018 to 2023) 24052023

Insurance Report

Nothing to report as no change. No changes to the insurance offering and no claims that would affect future rates.

Membership Report

See Chairmans report, to be updated at the AGM.

Other Reports

Safeguarding officer report

Several queries have been answered during the course of the year.

It remains very important that clubs follow BCA safeguarding policy and guidelines which are on the website. Those guidelines include a responsibility to check that cave trips w experienced, etc. Clubs are subject to 'safer recruitment' guidelines from the government. Any adult for whom the following is true, needs to be vetted, which includes 2 references and a DBS check:

- Overnight supervision of young people
- Unsupervised access to young people
- Regular work (including voluntary) with young people, which means more than 3 times in a month, even if accompanied by parents or vetted adults

I suggest that BCA should include the above paragraph on the annual club membership form, to remind clubs of their responsibilities in this area.

BCA can arrange for DBS checks and BCA Council agreed to fund these checks. I have only carried out two DBS checks. I think some clubs have no youth caving. In those that do have youngsters caving, they are generally supervised by adults who have been vetted through another agency, eg local authority or Scouts.

Chris Boardman
BCA Safeguarding Officer.

FSE delegate report

Ged Campion (Delegate).
David Botcherby (Vice Delegate).

The FSE has 30 member countries in Europe and beyond.

The FSE last General Assembly Meeting (GAM) was held at the **German National Conference in Breitscheid on the 20th May. This was also this year's Eurospeleo Forum. There were elections to existing posts and reconstituted bureau is as follows;**

President, Jean-Claude Thies from Luxembourg.
Vice-President: Christiane Meyer from Switzerland.
Secretary General: Alena Gessert from Slovakia.
Vice-Secretary: Fidele Messina from Italy.
Treasurer: Henk Goutier from Netherlands.
Vice-Treasurer: Ernest Geyer from Austria.

President of the European Cave Protection Commission ECPC continues to be Jean-Claude Thies, Luxembourg.
President of the European Cave Rescue Commission ECRC continues to be Antoniya Vlaykova, Bulgaria.
Head of the European Children and Young Cavers working group ECYC newly appointed Christiane Meyer, Switzerland.

For any further information please use FSE email address contact@eurospeleo.eu.

The full list of contacts may be found here <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/contact/>

The legacy of the International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) is showing positive signs of continuing for some years to come. Over 1,800 events from the IYCK have so far been recorded, including, online webinars, photo exhibitions, videos and competitions with a significant number hosted in Europe.

The work of the bureau continues to be conducted by exchange of emails, regular update meetings held online which since November have included commission leads and the newsletter editor.

EuroSpeleo Projects (ESPs) sponsoring and supporting caving expeditions, events, and projects from member countries. As countries slowly recover from the effects of the pandemic a healthy number of applications are filtering through for projects. In addition to this considerable work continues to be invested in maintaining the system of equipment sponsorship of European projects. Although there were no applications from the UK last year, we have received two applications very recently from UK teams venturing to the Middle East and Austria.

The next GAM of the FSE will be held in Breitscheid, Germany 20th May 2023.

Ged Champion.

BCA delegate to FSE

CRoW Working Group Report

As noted in last year's report, the court case is done. It is worth emphasising, that we did persuade the Court of Appeal to state that there is an arguable case in law that CROW applies to caving. But it was clear that pursuing it would require a new 'situation'. So we considered that the focus should now move to political activity. Since then there have been three significant developments.

In July 2022, we learnt about the Judicial Review being taken against the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) over wild camping. We made contact with DNPA and shared some of our legal documents with them as back ground material on the topic of the meaning of open air recreation. The case was heard in December and the court's decision made headlines in January 2023 (effectively banning wild camping). The judgement did not focus on the CRoW Act but on the 1985 Dartmoor National Park Act which also uses the phrase open air recreation. Since then DNPA have been granted permission to appeal the judgement on the grounds that that phrase open air recreation was potentially too narrowly interpreted by the judge in the judicial review. We await developments.

In June 2022, Caroline Lucas, the Green MP for Brighton, was successful in gaining a slot in the process of presenting private members bills. Her Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (Amendment) Bill is now undergoing its second reading. It has to be admitted that there is next to zero chance of the bill progressing, let alone becoming law. The significance of the bill is that it has

started a discussion within parliamentary circles on CRoW. Also Caroline Lucas gave a favourable response to our approach over amending the bill to clarify that CRoW did cover caving.

Caroline Lucas also opened a debate in parliament in mid May 2023 entitled Public Access to Nature. The significant feature of this debate was when the Labour Party's Shadow Minister for the Environment spoke to present their position, he mentioned the Glover Review and quoted "it feels wrong that many parts of our most beautiful places are off-limits to horse riders, water users, cavers, wild campers and so on" from it. He later made reference to a comment previously made by the Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment that "Labour will give the right to experience, the right to enjoy and the right to explore". So it would appear that the Labour Party would be receptive towards an argument that CRoW does cover caving.

I should add that it was mainly down to David Rose, that sufficient representations were made to the Glover Review for the topic to be recorded in the report of the review, and explicitly mentioned in the report's Proposal 16: Consider expanding open access rights in national landscapes. The Government responded by saying "We aim to review the open access maps to clarify rights and inform any further consideration of expanding open access rights". It is not clear as to what, if any, action is on going on this point.

As an aside, another aspect of getting CRoW to apply to caving is that it will bolster the protection of landowners against legal actions. A major provision of CRoW is to further reduce the liability owed by landowners to persons on access land. This would help to shore up the deficit which appeared in BCA's insurance policy cover towards landowners when cover was reduced by the insurer last year by requiring the caving party to contain BCA members. Previously, the policy covered everyone who descended a cave.

It is also worth clarifying that the authority to amend the CRoW Act as it applies in Wales was devolved to the Welsh Assembly. So a change to the English version of the CRoW Act will not apply in Wales. The Welsh Government have made it plain that they view considering whether CRoW applies to caving as being of low priority. There is reason to think that this is a view is based upon the opinions of their civil servants. So the potential for political developments in Wales would seem to be low.

Looking forward, as part of moving into political activity, BCA needs to get its voice heard in various quarters. One way of doing this is being members of 'conglomerate' bodies. It would appear that BCA Council decided to give up membership of the Sport & Recreation Alliance last year. This body's remit is to provide a voice of the sport and recreation sector to Government, policy makers and the media. So it should provide a useful amplifier to BCA's voice and also inform BCA of developments, obtain advice and making effective representations at a national level. There is also the Wildlife and Countryside Link which claims to be a "joint voice of the environment sector". It has 71 members amongst which are British Canoeing, BMC & Ramblers. Both have membership fees which would have to be paid if it is thought worth joining them. In addition, direct links with other bodies need to be fostered which will also incur expenses for meetings and travel.

Lastly, the existence of the CRoW Working Group appears to be in question, given the absence of the group in BCA Council's minutes since last April. A new lead for the group is needed, I have drafted this report at the prompting of other members of the Working Group. But following a major operation early this year, I admit to not having the energy to help actively push forward work on getting CRoW to apply to caving.

Bob Mehew

IT Report

I continue in the role of Acting IT Group Convenor, having given notice in September 2021 that I will step down as soon as my replacement can be found. Many thanks to the amazing IT Group volunteers for their continued efforts. IT work, particularly system administration, is not often glamorous, but it's very important!

Infrastructure

The BCA continues to maintain 1 virtual private server (VPS), on which we host our own sites and select other sites from caving organisations that we choose to support for the betterment of British caving, free of charge. There are 33 accounts on this VPS.

We also host some business critical services in the Cloud using Amazon Web Services.

Services

I would like to draw attention to the services that the IT Group maintains, as they are sometimes underutilised. The services maintained by the IT Group include:

- The Zoom licence booking system.
- The cloud shared working environment.
- The email and mailing list systems.
 - Our email server reputation has been greatly improved this year, resulting in far fewer emails sent by the BCA being flagged as spam.
 - Our AWS SES account that we use for emailing the membership has exceptional low bounce and complaint ratios.
- The various BCA managed websites such as british-caving.org.uk and newtocaving.com.
- The membership system.

Maintenance

Maintenance of our services takes up the bulk of the IT Group's time. This is generally routine maintenance, such as keeping software up-to-date. Occasionally we get something more exciting, like dealing with compromised accounts on our VPS sending out spam emails, or helping organisations migrate to and from the BCA server.

Projects

There haven't been many IT Group led projects this year, which is no bad thing as the maintenance is the time consuming work.

Get involved!

We're always looking for keen volunteers to join (or even manage?) the IT Group. It's an incredible opportunity to gain hands on experience with tools that you often wouldn't be able to afford to buy yourself, or be allowed to fiddle with at your place of work. I feel very lucky to have been allowed to learn most of my web development and system administration in this role, as I now do it as a full time job.

Registered Office: The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, BUXTON Derbyshire SK17 8RG - 01298 873810 - www.british-caving.org.uk

British Caving Library Report

The Library is finally back to working as normal in 2023, after the remaining effects of Covid restrictions left us partway through 2022. The attached bar charts show the progress in enquiries and visits and also the varying division between enquiries which simply request a scan of an item, as opposed to those which require us to carry out some research for the enquirer. It is encouraging that so many of those we assist make a monetary donation to the Library, including substantial amounts from overseas.

This year we have already, or will soon, host meetings of BCA Trainer Assessor groups, BCRA and DCA Council Meetings and a Conservation & Access Event run by a local club with visiting speakers. We also hosted a BCRA Field Meeting last summer. We are able to manage these meetings face-to-face and online as well, allowing people to participate via our online systems. Visitors wanting to do their own research are once again a regular feature, though much of our work in dealing with enquiries is dealt with online and by sending scans of material.

The BSA/Simpson archive material, currently on permanent loan from the Library to the British Geological Survey at Keyworth, is not yet accessible to enquirers online via BCRA - the Memorandum of Understanding between BCRA and BGS is having to be re-written before this can happen. Other archive surveys and maps from this era are now being catalogued by our two volunteers and will be stored at Glutton Bridge for the time being.

When the British Caving Library was set up in 2008 there existed only a printed catalogue of books and journals dated 2003, created by the then BCRA Librarian, and no surveys had been catalogued. A recent check found that altogether we have catalogued around 20,800 single printed items (Books and Journals) since our online catalogue first went live in 2009. More recently we have begun to catalogue modern surveys and maps, thanks to our Library Assistant and volunteers, and these will gradually be incorporated into the online bibliography/catalogue. We have dealt with around 2,200 of these so far (including the complete collection of John Beck's 1000 Peak District Surveys). We have also worked our way through a further 500+ archive surveys, with many hundreds, if not thousands, more still to deal with.

We are also now receiving a steady stream of archive material of all kinds and are making as much as possible of this accessible online, either through the Library website or by using separate cloud storage. We are looking into the best way to safeguard the more fragile items owned by the Library and are aware that this may come at some cost.

Our online presence is due to two volunteers who have worked with us since 2009: the Online Bibliography/catalogue, the BCRA Online Archives (photographic material) and the Audio Archive. All this information can be accessed via the Library website: caving-library.org.uk.

We now have a large collection of duplicate material, the result of donations to the Library, and we continue to seek a good home for these with other caving Libraries or individual caver collectors.

Jenny Potts, BCRA Library Co-ordinator
24-5-23

Accounts

Accounts approved by Council in March 2023, to be noted by the AGM

Account details are in the separate file “BCA Accounts 2022 for AGM”

Elections

Vacant posts open to nominations from the floor

BCA currently functions with assistance from three paid part-time staff which is most appreciated but largely operates with the goodwill of volunteers. In the event that we do not recruit to some of the current vacancies, it is likely we shall need to consider more paid staff for some of those positions with an attendant increase in costs which will end up being passed on to the membership and a corresponding increase in subscriptions.

The following positions will be vacant at the time of the AGM on Sunday 11th June 2023 at 10.30 am and open to nominations from the floor.

Treasurer (voting)

A member of the BCA Executive Committee along with the Chair and Secretary with overall responsibility for the BCA finances and with support from the Finance Committee.

Note As this is a voting position on Council, nominations will be forwarded to an electronic vote of the membership for approval.

Publications and information Officer (non-voting)

Assists BCA with publicity, engagement with its members and developing a media strategy with support from a Working Group.

Note As this is a non-voting position on Council, nominations will be considered by the BCA Council for approval at the Council Meeting on 27th June

Youth and Development Officer (non-voting)

This position is focused on providing support to young people and associated organisations developing their experience and caving skills with support from a Working Group.

Note As this is a non-voting position on Council, nominations will be considered by the BCA Council for approval at the Council Meeting on 27th June

IT manager (non-voting)

Managing the BCA IT systems with support from a Working Group.

Note As this is a non-voting position on Council, nominations will be considered by the BCA Council for approval at the Council Meeting on 27th June

Group/Club Representative (voting)

An individual position to represent the interests of Clubs and other groups on the BCA Council.

Note As this is a voting position on Council, nominations will be forwarded to an electronic vote of the membership for approval.

Individual Representative (voting)

Nigel's term of office as individual rep was incorrectly recorded as 22-24 when it should have been 21-23 which means he is up for re-election.

In anticipation of candidates interested before the AGM, please provide a nomination statement of **no more** than 300 words in support of your nomination and submit it to the Secretary BCA at secretary@british-caving.org.uk

For an informal discussion about any of the positions, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretary above or chair@british-caving.org.uk or treasurer@british-caving.org.uk We are also interested in anyone prepared to help with any of the positions above but not necessarily apply for the actual posts. Please get in touch.
Russell Myers Chair British Caving Association 15th May 2023

Election Statements

None received

Proposals

None received

AOB

Date and Time of 2024 AGM

Appendix

BCA Annual General Meeting 12th June 2022

Minutes

The meeting was held by Zoom

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Present

Russell Myers, Allan Richardson, Andrew McLeod, Jo White, Alan Walsh, Steve Holding, Ari Cooper-Davis, Andy Eavis, Jenny Potts, Josh White, Linda Wilson, Chris Boardman, Graham Mullan, Howard Jones, David Rose, Mike Higgins, Tony Radmall, Jan Walker.

(1) Welcome from the Chair.

RM welcomed everyone to the 2022 AGM.

(2) Apologies for absence and verification of quorum (10 members)

Nigel Atkins, John Gunn, Stephan Natynczuk, Ged Campion.

Quorum verified.

3) Declaration of items to be covered under Any Other Business.

None

(4) Acceptance of minutes from the October 2021 AGM (available on BCA website).

Proposed Jenny Potts

2nd Graham Mullan

All in favour passed.

(5a) Action items from 2021 AGM

All the action items from 2021 have been achieved.

There were no comments

(5b) Proposals from 2021 AGM

All proposals at the 2021 AGM were passed and were actioned.

There were no comments.

(6) Reports

Executive reports:

6.1 Chair (Russell Myers)

Bringing the AGM date back into line with pre-pandemic timing has created a short year and this year's AGM in June feels to be upon us with some speed. Whilst I personally feel not to have achieved as much as I may have wished the day-to-day functions of the Association continue to run providing services to members for which I express thanks to those involved on behalf of the membership at large.

In particular, it is pleasing to note the membership report showing an increase in overall membership (6202) when considered against the similar period ending in 2020 which the Covid pandemic had not had time to affect. Clearly, the restrictions at the time had a very serious effect on actual caving, all but wiping out the activity. The current membership figures and anecdotal evidence from the ground indicate that caving has bounced back and reflects the resilience of cavers to return to their chosen sport; it is most encouraging.

Of concern, is the lack of volunteers coming forward to help run the Association, these are highlighted in the vacant posts which require filling and for which we have not received any nominations. Whilst there is a feeling that Council has become too large and unwieldy and a proposal has been made to reduce the representatives by four, there are some key positions which really could do with being filled; the Conservation position being a prominent one.

I have a personal philosophy of putting more back than I take out of activities I have been engaged in and hope that members share something similar to the extent of coming forward and volunteering. I am happy to discuss any aspects of this with anyone maybe wavering about doing the right thing. Don't be afraid of jumping in at the deep end!

On a more serious, (as I write 27/5) the CRoW legal case has reached an unsatisfactory conclusion which has left those of us involved feeling deeply disappointed that the key issue about whether caving is a permissible activity remains unresolved. Irrespective of your views on CRoW, we owe a deep sense of gratitude to those directly involved for the time and effort they have dedicated to pursuing this course of action. I do not wish to dwell on the finer details of the outcome which will no doubt be highlighted in the CRoW working group convenor's report, suffice to say there are some positives on which to build future strategy to address this issue.

BCA policy remains that in the Association's opinion, caving is a permissible activity in CRoW designated land.

Ukraine became a situation of great concern for UK cavers and BCA issued a statement of support along with that from BCRA condemning unreservedly, the Russian invasion and war. Whilst our support is for the entire people of Ukraine, we cannot help but consider the effect this war is having on the Ukraine caving community. Initial points of contact have been made with key cavers in the country but it has been difficult to establish just what help can be provided other than the moral support we have demonstrated. It is clear that financial donations to recognised organisations e.g., DEC help overall with the knowledge that donations are disseminated through legitimate relief agencies. However, establishing how we may support the caving community there more directly is proving difficult to achieve; our contact indicates that many of the cavers are actively engaged in the war. However, it looks possible to become members of the Ukraine Speleological Association (UkrSA) both as individual members and also joining as a national body i.e., BCA which we will continue to explore.

Finally, it was a privilege to be elected as Chair of BCA for a further term of office and I feel honoured to have received your confidence to continue in the role which I will undertake to the best of my abilities.

Russell Myers

Chair

BCA

May 2022.

Update, the Ukraine contact is still developing.

6.2 **Secretary (Allan Richardson)**

The usual run of meetings, answering queries and pointing people in the right direction, in other words nothing out of the ordinary to report.

No comments

6.3 **Treasurer (Howard Jones)**

Current bank balances: as at 18/3/2022 was £245,000. Of which £88,000 is in medium term interest bearing accounts and £76,000 is in a short term deposit account.

Bank charges:

As at 1/1/2022 HSBC has decided to inflict bank charges on all charities. This brings them into line with most other retail banks. I estimate this will cost BCA around £300 a year.

Unusual spend since last Council:

BCRA 1st quarter donation for 2022 at £3,000. BCRC donation £1,500, FES affiliation for 2022 £625

BCA accounts result for 2021

I have started the above work and they have been sent to the independent reviewer. They show the following (round numbers):

Reduced income by £10k (Covid and reduced club membership fee Council decision 2021)

CRoW legal costs of £45k, total over the 2 years £80k.

QMC break even position (income and expenditure both £15k)

Record regional support due to increased C&A activity especially CSCC and DCA regions.

Deficit £60k (lower than I predicted)

Net assets £155k.

Once reviewed and signed I will bring to the BCA AGM in June for approval. And to the next Council meeting for noting. Once approved I will submit the tax return. No tax due.

Note any CRoW legal cost refund decision has not been reflected in the 2021 accounts as they stand. (See below)

CRoW financial situation.

A previous Council meeting agreed we could spend up to £90k pursuing this claim on the basis of its details and likely impact for UK caving as a whole. To date we have paid £67k and there is a further £13k due to the lawyers for recent work, taking the total cost to £80k as budgeted on our own lawyer (which he acknowledges). There is a court deliberation over costs in the matter due in the next few weeks and it is possible we could be awarded up to £35k in costs; at the maximum award it would mean a refund to BCA of some £20k.

BCA Budget 2022.

Has been approved and distributed to Council. If all the assumptions come true it's a break even budget.

HJJ March 2022.

6.4 Approval of the Accounts

- Note the accounts for the year ending 31/12/2021, as accepted by Council in Spring 2022.
- Note the appointment of a “suitably qualified person” to certify BCA accounts.

No Comments or questions to the Treasurer

Acceptance of 2021 Accounts

Proposer HJ

2nd JP

Passed

Insurance and Membership:

6.5 **Membership Administrator (Katie Eavis)**

Please find below reports from Katie Eavis and David Gibson regarding BCA membership matters

H J Jones March 2022.

BCA club membership report.

2022 Club Membership renewals

2020 vs 2021 vs 2022 Membership levels

	2020 (up until the 31st December)	2021 (up until the 31st December)	2022 (up until the 16th March)
Groups (including Member Clubs, Associates and Access Controlling Bodies)	166	162	162
CIMs (including Cavers, Non-Cavers, Students, Under 18s and CDG)	5308	5049	5137

Of the 162 group members 151 of these were BCA members in 2021. One is a new Access controlling body. A further ten have previously been BCA members but were not members in 2021, but have re-joined for 2022. Without access to more of Wendy's data I can't say if this is more than in a normal year – however I strongly suspect it is, and that certain clubs did not re-join in 2021 due to covid restrictions.

However as things look more promising in 2022 these clubs are renewing their BCA membership.

There are 11 groups that were 2021 members that have yet to renew for 2022. These have all had a reminder that their renewal is due and I am confident at least half of them will re-join BCA. One has emailed to let me know they won't be renewing this year.

Overall it looks as though things are looking up for club caving in 2022. Total number of CIMs has already exceeded the number in 2021, and there is still over 9 months for cavers to renew and new members to join. Anecdotally many caving clubs are reporting record levels of enquiries and interest in joining a caving club.

AN Members

AN members are members of a caving club who have stated they get their BCA membership and insurance through another route, either directly as a DIM or via another caving club. So far I have recorded about 1400 AN members for 2022. Now that most clubs and DIMs have renewed I am checking on the status of these to ensure they really are BCA members by some route. There are about 100 I can't currently find as BCA members and I am just starting to contact club secretaries to ask them to contact these members and ask to renew their membership, or confirm how and when they have renewed if they believe they have done.

Card Printing and Posting

Membership cards are being printed and posted out within 2 weeks of us receiving a club's renewal/ update spreadsheet.

DIM cards are also being printed and posted out within 2 weeks.

Regional councils.

I am not sure what Wendy did with the list of which clubs want to affiliate to which regional councils. This information is requested on the renewal paperwork each year. I plan to contact the regional councils to ask if they would like a list of affiliated clubs and their contact details.

2021 payments

All 2021 club payments have now been received except one. This is a payment for an associate member club (£25) who appears not to have paid. I have chased many times and am no longer getting replies to my emails. I suspect we will not get this payment now. However if they try and renew for 2022 I will get both year's payments before they can re-join!

Things to do:

- Chase up remaining 'AN' members who I can't find as 2022 BCA members
- Contact regional councils to pass on affiliated clubs list and contact details
- Chase club payments as they start to become more than a month overdue.

Katie Eavis

6.6 Insurance Manager (Howard Jones)

Claims

We have no outstanding claims. Hence we have received a no claims bonus of £1,200 for 2021. The 2 claims we received in 2020 have both been vigorously defended and have gone away.

Public Liability Policy renewal as at 1/1/2022

We have renewed the above for 2022 with no price increase for policies over 2021. We have updated the necessary documents on the BCA website including the FAQs document. The number of underwriters for sporting PL policies is reducing which is a medium term concern. One of the BCA underwriters left the market and was replaced. Some limited non-member cover was added in 2021 but to ensure PL cover its best to join BCA.

BCA travel policy

We have renewed the above for 2022 with no price increase for policies over 2021. However the war in Eastern Europe will affect some travel and hence insurance.

Howard Jones BCA Insurance Manager 22/05/2022

Nothing to add and no comments.

6.7 **Conservation and Access (vacant)**

No report.

No comments.

Thanks to JP for trying to pull together a Conservation Group. JP reported that she had the beginnings of a list, ongoing.

HJ noted that there was good Conservation and Access activity across the regions.

6.8 **CRoW Working Party (David Rose)**

29 May 2022

As council members will recall, following the terms of the settlement of our judicial review over the meaning and application of the open access provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) against the Welsh Government, the BCA submitted representations to it in February. The invitation to make these representations was part of the settlement.

It should be recalled that our lawyers had told us very clearly that we ought to accept this settlement, because if we didn't, the way the law works means we would likely have had to pay much higher costs, without getting the fundamental issue resolved. The likelihood, according to Gwion Lewis QC, was that because the settlement offer was made formally and thus was known to the court, we would not even have been able to persuade the judge to hear argument about the meaning of the CROW Act, but would have wasted time and money on procedural questions that wouldn't have clarified the Act's meaning at all. The judge would have said: "You should have taken

this offer which would have allowed you to make representations. That remains the best next step. And the fact you didn't means you must now pay the costs incurred by the other side in this hearing."

Regrettably, at the last BCA council, held when I was away caving in Mexico, an inaccurate account of these developments was given by a former group member, Stuart France, who insisted we should have gone to court anyhow. He claimed that I had not shared this legal advice with the rest of the group, nor kept them informed as to the decision making process that followed. In fact, as the email trail shows – and if anyone wants to see it, I can provide it – both the CROW group and the executive were kept fully informed at every stage. I forwarded the critical advice from Gwion Lewis QC that we should settle on the day I received it. I followed this up with an email to the group and the exec in which I tried to explain this in non-technical terms. Several CROW group members and the BCA Treasurer commented in further emails to me that we did indeed have to accept the settlement, much as this went against the grain. I am grateful to the two group members, Tim Allen and Jenny Potts, who have already written to the exec to support the above account and disassociating themselves from Stuart, who has in any event resigned from the group.

In our representations we argued that that even if it did not accept that CROW does not apply to caving, the WG should convene an access reform advisory body to consider how and whether our access should be reformed. The Government has now responded, and its answer is a resounding "no". (The English Government is effectively also a party to the case.) For the very first time, they have given proper reasons for rejecting our arguments. Their main point is that there is no need to reform cave access, or even to consider it, because this would involve a disproportionate use of resources that would be better deployed elsewhere. Some of the evidence they cite here is bizarre, and maybe open to challenge: for example, they say that the location of cave entrances is unknown, and that caves are not properly mapped, so establishing whether a particular cave actually is on CROW land would cost a fortune.

Meanwhile, last week the judge in the first case finally made a ruling on costs. He has determined that the case amounts to a "score draw": neither side has to pay the other's costs. Of course, that means we don't get reimbursed.

So where does this leave us? I asked our lawyers to assess whether, in light of the Government's response, which we think contains factual errors, we would stand a good chance of success if we now lodged a second judicial review, and whether, if we did, the court would cut to the chase – ruling simply on the meaning of the Act and the refusal of the Government to set up a new advisory body to consider widening cavers' access – and whether it would do so without the procedural distractions that bogged the first case down.

On Friday I had an online meeting with our solicitor Richard Buxton and Gwion Lewis QC. The upshot was that we are, for the time being, at the end of the legal road.

In a nutshell, Gwion addressed four issues:

- We are unlikely to succeed in an appeal against the decision of the judge not to award us costs from the WG. He feels the decision was wrong, but the Court of Appeal reverses such decisions very rarely. He does point out that not having costs awarded against us does represent a level of success.

In his view, the response to the submissions we made DOES represent a justiciable decision over whether CROW applies to caving. Therefore if we were to launch a second JR, we would be at least 60% likely to succeed in an attempt to get the court to focus solely on the issue we have always wanted resolved: the meaning of the law.

- However, the detailed reasons set out for the first time by the WG in its response means we would be much less likely to win. The reasons and evidence cited are open to challenge. But the fact they exist and the detail in which they are set out mean it would be a very bold judge who disregarded them. The Court of Appeal would be even less likely to find in our favour. The courts would, Gwion thinks, likely decide that this was properly a matter for government, not the courts, especially because of the argument a decision in our favour would have resource implications. Courts would not be likely to tell the WG: "You have to do this, even though you say it would cost money you'd rather spend on other things, that would affect a larger group of people." Therefore Gwion advises AGAINST any further JR.
- Nevertheless, we can chalk up some small victories. We have persuaded the Court of Appeal to state that there is an arguable case in law that CROW applies to caving, and that the WG was wrong to exclude us from its first access reform group. Moreover, the WG refused our offer of a "part 8 hearing" which would have been a joint approach asking the courts to clarify the law. This suggests it is far from confident we are wrong. It may be that one day, we will want to pursue another court case making a similar claim, in other circumstances, perhaps in England. If so, these victories would weigh in our favour and could be cited in court. They can also be used in a further campaign of persuasion with lawmakers.

Jenny has already suggested that we should concentrate on politicians for now, if we want to continue this campaign. Gwion thinks she is right. And I would suggest we should especially be targeting Labour ones, since Labour is increasingly looking likely to win the next election – and will have a much more liberal attitude to outdoors access in general. I am happy to continue to try to lead this. In my new job as a political journalist, I have a parliamentary "access all areas" lobby pass, which means it's very easy for me to talk face to face with politicians.

In summary: the position is more uncertain than it was before – and the needle has moved a little in our favour. But the court case is done.

David Rose
BCA CROW group convenor

GM asked for clarification on landowner liability, DR replied that the law is unclear and we have to state that.

LW said that it was important not to mislead landowners on the legal position and that is the BCA's position. DR replied that it was very important not to mislead landowners

RM commented on the liability insurance and asked HJ to comment, HJ replied that in the event of a caving access agreement being agreed, whether by an individual or a group, then the BCA Insurance will respond to an incident.

RM said that Council meeting of 7th June agreed that we needed to draw a line under the Legal Action.

RM proposed that the AGM votes to end this stage of the CROW action.

JW queried why were we voting on something that Council had already agreed on. MH wondered what would happen if the membership voted against the proposal and wished to continue the legal challenge? DR replied that due to tight deadlines there was no possibility of continuing the current challenge.

AR proposed that having noted the comments of JW and MH and the Council decision, the AGM thanked DR and his team for their work and move on.

2nd GM

Carried unanimously.

6.9 **Publications and Information Officer** (Vacant)

No report.

6.10 **Newsletter Editor**

No Newsletter, DR having resigned from the post.

6.11 **British Caving Library Report (Jenny Potts)**

This report covers the period from September 2021 to the present; it is for information and reflects the situation at the time it is being written.

Following the relaxation of the Covid-19 contact rules we have been able to return to our normal routine of working together in the Library on one day a week and welcoming, by appointment, visitors doing research.

Librarian Mary Wilde has continued to deal with foreign journals, which we receive in exchange for BCRA Caves & Karst Science, and also with books. I continue to deal with newly acquired UK journals, sent to us by BCA member clubs, and with archive

materials now arriving in increasing amounts. We also buy any relevant newly published books, etc. which are brought to our attention and are very grateful to those authors and editors who provide us with a free copy for the Library. As Katie Eavis has now transferred to dealing with BCA Membership, we have been pleased to welcome Karen Slatcher, who works for us one day a week and has taken over dealing with modern surveys.

Mary and I both deal with incoming enquiries, passing the enquiries between us so that there is minimum delay in responding, usually by emailing out scans. (There was no drop in the number of enquiries we dealt with during the Covid-19 lockdown periods compared to more normal times.) We also both deal with visitors coming to do research and I come in regularly at weekends.

Volunteers maintain the Library website, including the BCRA Online Archives, the Audio Archives and the all-important Online Bibliography/Catalogue.

Our two regular volunteers cataloguing the late John Beck's legacy of Peak District surveys, have now completed cataloguing approximately 1,000 surveys, aerial photos and maps. Some of these have now been scanned and are on the Derbyshire Cave Registry website where they are available to all cavers. These two volunteers have now started on the archive surveys passed on with the Eli Simpson collection.

Other Archive material has continued to arrive in the Library throughout the year and is, if anything, increasing as the existence of BCL becomes better known to relative of deceased cavers wondering what to do with their collections.

The library welcomes enquiries by phone, email or personal visit and enquiries continue to run at between 80 to 90 per year. We are now recording the types of enquiry so that we know what % now require us to carry out research (which may take a number of hours for each enquiry), as opposed to the simple scan-and-email which takes only minutes.

The Library has excellent WiFi plus digital display facilities for meetings as well as scanners, copiers, etc. which can be used by visitors doing research. The facilities continue to be used by other groups: QMC and Training Administrative groups, a DCA Regional Council meeting and a BCRA Council meeting is due in July.

Jenny Potts, (j.potts@bcra.org.uk)

BCRA Library Co-ordinator, 23 May 2022

JP reported to the meeting that there had been an offer of a very large donation to the Library by the son of Peter Binns who was caving in 1934 with Eli Simpson. The donation was for the production of archive material which was now online.

AR proposed that a vote of thanks was recorded for JP and the team with a mention for John Gardiner's input.

6.12 **IT Working Party (Ari Cooper-Davis)**

If the last couple of years have been all about Zoom meetings and virtual AGMs for the IT group, this year it's been all about virtual private servers.

The IT Group have decommissioned two of our virtual private servers and replaced them with one new one. This will reduce server costs. This is used to host 33 accounts free of charge that are of significant value to our membership. These include BCA affiliated organisations such as the BCRA and the Cave Registry, cave rescue organisations such as the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group, and regional councils such as the Devon & Cornwall Underground Council.

We have been forced to move these servers away from Memset to their owners' new cloud platform; a task that took considerable volunteer time and effort. Thank you to the webmasters who we host for being very good about the minor disruption and downtime that this entailed.

We have performed an audit of the domains that we register for both our own use and on behalf of the organisations that we provide hosting for, again in doing so reducing costs.

Our ongoing projects include:

- working with the membership secretary to transition onto the new online membership database (this should not result in any disruption for individuals or clubs).
- working with the webmasters that we host to transition away from older software versions (particularly PHP) in order to improve server security and performance.
- continuing to support the BCA's work through provision of email, administrative, and technical services and support

We are always looking for volunteers to get involved with the IT Group, who can take on as much or as little as they'd like. This can be quite rewarding and interesting, and we'd like to help support the development of our volunteers as best we can. If you'd be interested in taking on some volunteering, particularly the Chair role, please get in touch with it@british-caving.org.uk

Thank you so much to the fantastic volunteers who are keeping this all going: particularly to Angus Sawyer and David Gibson for their invaluable and long-standing service.

Ari Cooper-Davis
IT Group Chair 2022

Ari supported the idea of getting paid IT Support, volunteer effort was better used elsewhere. Various people spoke in support.

RM undertook that Council would get on with this.

Action

RM

6.13 Training, Equipment and Qualifications (Steve Gray)

It has been a very strange year to be new in post.

We've started to come out of Covid and people are getting active and very busy.

We've had an amalgamation of the Training and Equipment Committees and formed a new working group.

At this point we have had two meetings on zoom and the first ones Minutes were ratified at the meeting on Wednesday 1st June. These will be uploaded too the website soon.

As you can imagine there are lots of things to sort and agree on before we can move forward efficiently.

One of the main ones is we are currently trying to sort out our Terms of Reference.

On reading the first draft that we inherited, it was noticed that there was no mention of equipment!

So far we have discussed and started to implement:

- Regional bolting. We are trying to form a full picture of what happens where and how we can support the regions if needed.
- Funding . It has been decided that for training funding that the T/O should approach the Region and they claim off the BCA later. The Budget that we hold as the T and E group will be for all special interest groups.
- Training. All regions are getting very active with the caver training element and are taking approaches that work in their regions. We are agreeing transparency policies and coming up with ways to bring other trainers on board. The vast majority of courses are fully subscribed.

This list is not exhaustive but are the main elements covered so far.

To move forward as a working group, we would like some IT assistance. It has been suggested within the group that maybe the BCA should look at a paid full time IT position. whether we like it or not, IT is the way the worlds going and the younger generation, coming in to caving, now expect it.

After being in post since the last AGM, I still have no way to upload minutes or set up zoom meetings without the help of the BCA chair. Nearly everyone in BCA is a volunteer and a full time IT position can only help all the groups.

We are trying to meet at least every 4 months as a whole group with small groups holding their own discussions on items and reporting back, in between.

We are sticking pretty well to agendas, reports are mainly coming in on time from the regions and being read beforehand. This is how we are keeping the meetings under 1 ½ hrs the aim is to get them to 1hr max.

If anyone has any questions for myself or the group, please contact your regional T/O or equipment officer in the first instance, alternatively please feel free to contact me directly.

I would like to finish by thanking everyone in the new working group for all their hard work and help with the new working group. I would also like to thank the people behind the scenes who have given me useful suggestions, hints and offers of help with negotiating the BCA as a whole.

Unfortunately I can't attend the AGM as I'm working abroad for 2 weeks.

Steve Gray

No comments

6.14 **Youth and Development Officer (Josh White)**

Youth & Development Report

2022 AGM CHECC

After a couple of troubling years, thanks to COVID, university caving clubs have come out fighting, and CHECC organised two fantastic events, the northern and southern CHECC forum. The cohesion between university clubs is obvious, even cross region, and will be key to keeping this momentum going.

Further kit loan agreements are in the process of being agreed to help university clubs who are unable to get the required level of funding from their universities/unions cave using safe equipment.

Recently the Youth & Development group and CHECC have been able to agree a store in the mendips, where certain caving kit will be stored, with the aim of reducing the amount of kit required to be transported on weekends, making them easier to arrange, and increasing their frequency. Our thanks goes to the Wessex Cave Club for arranging this. Over the next 18 months, the aim is to set up a similar store in each of the major caving regions in the UK.

Website Development

Several very popular articles have been posted on the BCA website by Y&D, that has raised the profile of the group, but also has raised the profile of important issues such as diversity and inclusion and youth related caving issues.

Recently a member of the Y&D working group has been introduced to the newtocaving website. We intend on utilising this website better, that due to various issues has been mostly left since its acquisition by the BCA.

International Congress of Speleology Grants

An idea was brought forwards by the representative for CSCC to provide grants to young people from the UK to support them going to ICS. Upon discussion within the Y&D working group, the proposal was accepted, but based upon applications coming in from groups of young people or those in full time education.

After putting together some fantastic applications two £500 grants have now been provided to groups associated with Reading University and University of Bristol. We look forwards to hearing reports back from the congress.

Youth & Development worked alongside other members of council to put this scheme together, and as a group we look forward to being able to work alongside other parts of the BCA to help provide services to our members.

Experience Caving

In light of a big return to caving happening for most, this project, described in the May 2021 report to council has taken a bit of a backseat. I intend on having a big push before the end of 2022 with regards to upping the inclusion of young people within caving clubs. This will start with providing and rolling out a full guide to all clubs with recommendations about how they can open their clubs up to young people. For this I am working alongside Chris Boardman, BCA Safeguarding Officer.

Scout Caving

Scout caving has restarted in some regions but not others since lockdown. It is anticipated that the covid break will result in fewer scout cave leaders. Discussions between Y&D and Scout cavers are ongoing as to what support the BCA can provide with regards to this.

Charterhouse Caving Age Restrictions

It is good to see that Charterhouse Caving Club have reduced their age limit from 16 to 12 (via 18), and we see this as progress, but not the end goal. It has been noted that the most recent "reasoning" for the age restrictions, around young people having a 'greater tendency to shine lights at anything of interest, including bats' was not previously cited, but also seems fairly baseless.

Diversity & Inclusion

A proposal from the convener of the Youth & Development working group was accepted at the last AGM, as well as a proposal to ensure gender neutral wording in the constitution wording and council roles. These are solid steps forward, and I hope to continue off the back of these in the coming year to ensure that these solid steps

become great strides by utilising information learned at a national outdoors conference to provide recommendations to clubs, regional bodies and the BCA itself as to how we can become more inclusive as organisations.

Josh White
Youth & Development May 2022

LW and AC-D thanked JW for his work.

6.15 Constitution and Operations WG. (COG) (Andrew McLeod)

Not a great deal has happened this year, but we are going to carry on working on the structure and operations of council.

6.16 Safeguarding and Safety (Chris Boardman)

No safeguarding concerns have been raised with me during the past 12 months. I wrote the safeguarding policy, and guidelines for clubs, when the position of safeguarding officer was created, and those guidelines remain accessible on the BCA website. Clubs or members who have questions or concerns are welcome to contact me directly.

A small number of clubs have been in touch with plans to take youngsters caving. When this involves unsupervised contact (ie parents or teachers / youth workers / scout leaders not present), I have arranged for DBS checks for club members who have kindly volunteered to take the kids caving. Only a very few checks have been made and BCA Council agreed some time ago to fund them, so there is no cost to clubs or members.

I've also written up a procedure whereby instructors with BCA qualifications who need a DBS certificate can apply for one through BCA. This is funded directly by the instructors themselves. I'm just waiting for BCA Treasurer to think of a suitable method for instructors to pay - I have to pay by credit card for each check, so there needs to be a process for instructors to reimburse me.

Chris Boardman
BCA Safeguarding Officer

JP commented that the website was very useful, with advice for young people who wished to join their club.

CB said it would be useful if BCA could pass on the good practice of Orpheus CC to other clubs.

JW said getting young people caving is one of his projects.

6.17 Radon Working party (Vacant)

No report.

6.18 **UIS Representative Report (Andy Eavis)**

The last BCA AGM was on 10th October, the International Year of Caves and Karst was in full swing with BCRA contributing with monthly Monday night lectures, these went down very well and were well received.

The International Year has been extended up to July this year and will finish at the end of the International Congress in France. It has been a great success and there is a book and a video produced.

Work has been continuing all over the world with various events from the International Year, please look on the website for more information - <http://iyck2021.org/>

Since then, the main thrust of the UIS has been towards the International Congress, please look at the website <https://uis-speleo.org/>

Obviously, the big event that has taken place in the last few months is the Russian invasion of Ukraine which has split the international caving population up the middle. The UIS initially brought out a very luke-warm statement which had been prepared from a number of inputs, including countries that were initially showing a certain amount of sympathy towards Russia, ultimately when things got completely out of hand there was almost universal agreement within the representatives from each UIS country that a stronger statement should be made. The statement below was issued.

The revised UIS Bureau statement:

The UIS Bureau condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the military invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. This conflict is creating a severe humanitarian crisis that is worsening daily. The UIS Bureau stands with the Ukrainian people and calls on the Russian aggressors to immediately cease their brutal, inhumane and unprovoked violence.

The UIS Bureau is appalled by the current invasion and war crimes committed by the armed forces of the Russian Federation. In solidarity with Ukrainian cavers and scientists, organisations worldwide, the UIS Bureau is freezing all cooperation with caving organisations and speleological institutions of the Russian Federation until further notice.

The UIS Bureau recommends to the next UIS General Assembly to suspend Russia from membership of the UIS until Ukraine's sovereignty and internationally recognised borders, including Crimea, are restored and that the Russian language be excluded as an official UIS language.

UIS Bureau

People have criticised the International Union of Speleology for being rather slow on this, but in reality, they are composed of representatives from over 50 countries, many have good friends in both Russia and Ukraine and although most of them do not condone the aggression they don't see why it should be taken out on cavers. I

think now the general opinion is it has got so out of hand that anything that may help towards changing public opinion in Russia and showing support for people in Ukraine is worth doing, including the hard line.

The 18th International Congress of Speleology France Savoie Mont-Blanc 24-31st July this year 2022 will be spectacular as they always are. I personally, with a couple of others am driving from North Sea Ferry through France to the congress centre, travel will be the major cost, everything else will be reasonably priced and well worth the money.

Attending an International Speleo Congress is a life changing experience. Please look at the website <http://uis-speleo.org/index.php/event/18th-international-congress-of-speleology-2/>

The next International Congress of Speleology after France has been announced as Belo Horizonte-MR-Brazil from 20th to 27th July 2025. It will be back in Europe for 2029, Britain could be a potential possibility for hosting.

See you at the AGM on Zoom Sunday 12th June.

Andy Eavis
27th May 2022

Nothing to add, other than Alexander Klimchouk (Ukraine) and his family were now in the UK. Andy was keen to encourage people to attend the UIS conference.

6.19 FSE Representative (Ged Campion)

The FSE comprises 31 countries in Europe and beyond.

The FSE General Assembly Meeting (GAM) was held in October as a virtual meeting because of the COVID restrictions. Countries and members of the bureau have remained the same with no new additions this time. Details of the meeting can be found in the minutes of the GAM.

This summer will be a busy time for international congresses and gatherings due to the backlog caused by the pandemic.

When the COVID-19 pandemic befell us, we thought that things couldn't get any worse - but they have, as we have all witnessed Russia's brutal military invasion of Russia Ukraine. Neither Russia nor Belarus are members of the FSE nor ever has been. The FSE bureau has condemned this violation of a sovereign nation and asked member countries to do whatever they can to support the Ukrainian people. Ukraine's delegate to the FSE is Bogdan Ridush a palaeontologist at the Chernvtsti National University in Western Ukraine near the Romanian border and provides updates on social media

Despite these disturbing developments, we are all eagerly looking forward to important up and coming speleological events this summer, especially the 18th International Congress of Speleology (ICS) in Savoie (France) and the 14th EuroSpeleo Forum in Burgos (Spain) with its pre-congress in Cantabria.

To encourage young cavers/scientists to attend the ICS, the FSE has introduced a scholarship award scheme to provide financial support.

These promise to be great events. After two years of virtual General Assembly Meetings (GAMs) forced upon us by the pandemic, the FSE bureau is delighted to be able to hold a face to face GAM at the ICS. We look forward to seeing members attend in person.

The Berger camp (20th July to 10th August) is also open to registrations.

Bureau meetings have given us the opportunity to reflect upon the structure of the bureau, our roles and responsibilities in a changing world and the statutes that support our federation. A small working group will be established to look at this in more detail.

Opportunities to offer ESP project money recently has been seriously limited due to travel restrictions and expeditions being postponed.

Considerable work continues to be invested in maintaining the system of sponsoring European projects, through the EuroSpeleo Projects (ESP), the EuroSpeleo Forums (ESF), as well as the EuroSpeleo Protection Label (ESPL).

Our strongest commission, the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) continues to effectively engage in issues that are vital to protect our caves and karst. The 6th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium "Assessing, monitoring and protecting cave biotopes and geotopes through Natura 2000" was held in Germany from 26.10.21. to 30.10.21. This was a very successful event.

Ged Campion.

BCA delegate to FSE

No comments

Accepting the reports

Prop Idris Williams

Graham Mullan

Accepted unanimously

(7) Election of BCA Council Members for vacancies arising in 2022

There were no nominations prior to the meeting, RM asked the floor for any nominations.

AE volunteered to stand as an individual Member.

JW said that there should be an election statement from candidates. AE said he would produce a statement this afternoon for circulation. AC-D would get it on the website that evening.

RM said the Council had the power to co-opt.

Roles and Nominations 2022 AGM					
Role (as at 30th March 2022)	Name	Nominati on	Proposed	Second	Notes
Conservation and Access WG convenor.	No nominations				
Publication and Information Officer	No nominations				
<u>Group Representatives</u>					
Position 1, 21-23	Josh White				
Position 2, 21-23	Vacant				
<u>Individual Member Representatives</u>					
Position 1, 22-24	Nigel Atkins				
Position 2, 22-24	Vacant	Andy Eavis	Jenny Potts	Tony Radmall	Elected pending online vote

Notes

1. There is a proposal below to reduce the number of positions of both Individual and Group Representatives from 4 each to 2 each which may affect these positions.

2. 2021 AGM proposals to change the structure of Training and Equipment & Techniques Committees, were carried in the subsequent vote and created a Working Group convened by Steve Gray who was elected as Training Officer.

8. Election statements:

Andrew James Eavis

I was disappointed to see that there are a large number of vacant places in council and since I attend most meetings anyway it might be helpful to fill one of them, however I potentially could be filling a position that would be much better filled by younger blood!!

I do support British caving to the best of my ability and it takes up a lot of my time.

I have been involved with British Caving Politics for well over 50 years and know quite a lot about what goes on.

I am still an active caver and organising expeditions I am leading a team to Mulu this November.

I might feel more comfortable with an official position on Council.

9. Proposals to BCA AGM 2022

Removal of 2 Individual and 2 group representatives

Over the last few AGMs Council has struggled to fully fill these roles, and when they have the roles there is very little output from these members.

I propose that we reduce the number of individual representatives to 2 and group representatives to 2, with one representative of each to be elected at each AGM with a term of two years.

If this proposal is accepted, the individual and group representative with the highest number of votes at this AGM will accept the role.

The relevant constitutional changes would be as follows:

6.2 The Association shall have a National Council comprised of the Officers of the Association, up to ~~four~~two representatives from the class of Group Members, up to four two representatives from the class of Individual Members.

Proposed: JW (14859)

Seconded: HJ (18515)

JW spoke to the proposal

Comment from GM as to how the clubs who have no votes vote for the Group reps.
JW said he was looking into how this could be sorted.

LW agreed that the number needs to be reduced and rationalised.

JP pointed out that there was nowhere yet for clubs to get together to report problems etc, perhaps a forums could be set up for clubs to communicate, they could then suggest some club (Group) representatives.

Proposer Josh White

2nd Tony Radmall

All in favour passed, passed to online voting system.

(11) Any other business

A vote of thanks was recorded on behalf of Idris Williams who is standing down, for his many years of service to BCA and its forerunner groups.

IW reported that it had been a pleasure.

12)Date and time of 2023 AGM

To be confirmed.

