



# British Caving Association

Minutes of BCA AGM, 24 March 2007, Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch

<b>Present:</b>	Mick Day (MD)	BCA Hon. Chairman / Individual Member
	Karen Slatcher (KS)	BCA Training Administrator ( <i>Recorder</i> )
	Dave Cooke (DC)	BCA Hon. Treasurer / Individual Member
	Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer / Individual Member
	Bernie Woodley (BW)	SWCC / Individual Member
	Trevor Faulkner (TF)	BCRA / Individual Member
	Sue Mabbett (SM)	Cambrian Caving Council Representative / DIM
	Simon Froude (SF)	Bradford PC / Individual Member
	David Jean (DJ)	Devon & Cornwall Underground Council
	Charles Milton (CN)	Individual Member
	Damien Weare (DW)	Individual Member
	Alan Finch (AF)	William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust
	Les Williams (LW)	Publ. & Info. Officer / Club Rep. Wessex Caving Club
	Chris Jewell (CJ)	CHECC / BCA Youth & Devt. Off. / Individual Member
	Steve King (SK)	CSCC / Individual Member
	Boyd Potts (BP)	OCC / Individual Member
	Mike Davis (MDs)	Shropshire Caving & Mining Club
	Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO
	Idris Williams (IW)	BCA Training Officer / SWCC / Shropshire Scouts
	Clark Friend (CF)	Radon Working Party / Individual Member
	Bob Mehew (BM)	Rope Testing Officer / Individual Member
	Andy Pryke (AP)	BCA Equipment Officer / Club Member
	Jenny Potts (JP)	Acting BCA Hon. Secretary / DCA Rep. / Ind Member

The meeting commenced at 10:50 am.

## 1. Chairman's Welcome – Introductions and procedures

## 2. Apologies for Absence

David Judson	Legal & Insurance Officer
Glenn Jones	Membership Administrator / CNCC
Andy Eavis	UIS Rep
Emma Porter	Individual Member Representative
Jim Cochrane	Newsletter Editor
Owen Clark	Club Representative, Cwmbran Caving Club
Nick Williams	Insurance Manager
Graham Mollard	Training Officer for election

## 3. Applications for Membership

3.1 **Group Members:** None at this time.

3.2 **Direct Individual Members:** None at this time.

There was no list of members for election available and it was decided that this item was not necessary and should be dropped from the agenda in future.

**4. Minutes of the 2006 AGM** (*Previously circulated and on website*)

- 4.1 **Proposal that they be taken as read:** JP confirmed that the minutes have been circulated to all Council members, incl the BCRA Chairman, some parts were summarised in the last newsletter and they have also been on website for some time. She added that all Council and Special Committee meeting minutes have been added to the website - LW confirmed that he has added everything he has been sent.

*That they be taken as read.*

Prop. Jenny Potts, Sec. Les Williams, *all in agreement.*

- 4.2 **Proposal that they be confirmed as a true record:**

*That they be confirmed as a true record.*

Prop. Jenny Potts, Sec. Les Williams, *all in agreement.*

**5. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 2006 AGM**

- 5.1 24 Progress on Dissolution of NCA. DC said that this is practically complete. All monies had been transferred from the NCA accounts as at March 2006. Bob Mehew, as the last NCA Treasurer, had listed all assets and three out of the four Trustees agreed with the list – Pete Mellors is the remaining Trustee still to be contacted.

**Officers' Annual Reports**

**6. Chairman's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

*That the Chairman's report be accepted.*

Prop. Bob Mehew. Sec. Jenny Potts. *Agreed unanimously.*

**7. Acting Secretary's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

- 7.1 JP had discovered that although Special Committees' minutes were posted to the website, there was not a complete paper record. To rectify this she had collated those minutes she had and downloaded some from the website. Copies currently missing are the Conservation & Access Committee meeting from June 2005, Finance Committee meeting from January 2007 and the Conservation & Access Committee meeting from last weekend. JP suggested that in future Officers send a paper copy of each set of minutes to the Hon Sec, as well as informing the Hon Sec that the minutes have been sent to the Webmaster for addition to the website.

*That the Acting Secretary's report be accepted.*

Prop. Bob Mehew. Sec. Andy Pryke. *Agreed unanimously.*

**8. Treasurer's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

- 8.1 DC suggested that the subscription rates for 2008 need to be thought about very carefully.
- 8.2 The Sports Council have suggested in the past that for good practice reserves should be sufficient to meet one year's expenditure.
- 8.3 Training – the figures are misleading because in 2005 £5,428 of access grant was shown separately against Conservation & Access. Also numbers of people applying for registration went down. The total surplus for 2006 is less than the grants. Training should become self-funding and the only way to do this is to put fees up, but it should be done over a number of years. Bob Mehew observed that recreational training should be funded by the general fund.
- 8.4 Membership – Glenn Jones has been very busy, but DC plans to sit down with him and Nick Williams to rationalise the current systems and begin their computerisation. AP noted that one issue is memberships run from year to year and therefore results in a huge amount of work in January.

- 8.5 DC plans to review our financial services and put reserves in a high interest account. This may cause constitutional issues with signatories.
- 8.6 BM commented that we are incurring hundreds of pounds of charges from Nat West because membership cheques are being banked with them and then funds are transferred to the BCA account with HSBC.

***That the Treasurer be authorised to open a new account at a suitable bank with signatories being Treasurer, Chairperson and Insurance Officer.***

Prop. Bob Mehew. Sec. Chris Jewell. ***Agreed nem con.***

Trevor Faulkner and Sue Mabbett abstained as they felt this was detail for council, not the AGM.

- 8.7 ***That the Treasurer's report be accepted.***  
Prop. Jenny Potts. Sec. Boyd Potts. ***Agreed unanimously.***

## **9. Conservation & Access Officer's Report (Written report tabled)**

- 9.1 MICC and Ethical Code - BM observed that a review of the present redraft should go to a future council meeting for review and adoption, but it should be sent to each special committee beforehand for review.
- 9.2 Water – AP said that in the Vercors in France certain caves have been closed due to a European Directive, because cavers are considered to be polluting the water. This may become an issue in the UK. Ultimately cavers can work with the authorities to assist in identifying sources of pollution. EL said that a couple of weeks ago the EA held a national meeting for sporting users of water. BCA were not invited, but EL went anyway and the EA at national level did not appear to realise that caving includes water. JP replied that the DCA were already working with the EA to solve pollution issues in certain Derbyshire caves, and a data logger had been put one cave. MD suggested that it means Special Committees keep in touch with the local branch of statutory bodies.

***That the C & A Officer's report be accepted.***

Prop. Steve Holding. Sec. Steve King. ***Agreed unanimously.***

## **10. Equipment Officer's Report (Written report tabled)**

- 10.1 Corrections to printed Equipment Officer's Report: In first para should refer to Singing Rock equipment, not Singing River equipment and first para of Anchor Inspection/Installation should refer to BCA website, not BCA site.
- 10.2 Hilti drills - the purchase of 3 new ones has been confirmed.
- 10.3 Singing Rock bolts – The bolts we have been using are no longer available and new bolts must be sourced. One feature that has been requested is to have "BCA" laser-etched on each bolt, but AP has no costing yet.
- 10.4 A consultation document of thirty pages is on the equipment section of the BCA website and has been circulated to the BMC, mountain rescue teams and cave rescue organisations, with only a very few responses. DC said that the sticking point is future bolt installers, who are currently chosen by regional councils, but the Regional Councils have not responded to the consultation document.
- 10.5 Rope Test Officer's Report (Written report tabled)**

BM regrets he has still not been able to test ropes he had been given at Hidden Earth.

***That the Equipment Officer's and Rope Test Officer's reports be accepted.***

Prop. Les Williams. Sec. Damian Weare. ***Agreed unanimously.***

## **11. Training Officer's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

- 11.1 It was agreed that thanks should be sent to Pat Ramsden, the retiring Training Administrator, and it was suggested to send a bottle of red wine and a letter of appreciation. JP & BP to deliver.
- 11.2 Advisory Booklet on Weather & Flooding – IW hopes to find someone willing to pull together some information for this booklet, as past information is no longer available for publication.
- 11.3 There was some discussion as to whether Dave Elliott's excellent book on SRT might possibly being republished in updated form at some future date.

***That the Training Officer's report be accepted.***

Prop. Steve Holding. Sec. Andy Pryke. ***Agreed unanimously.***

## **12. Publications & Information Officer's Report incl. Webmaster's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

- 12.1 LW reported that DW is looking for new printers, initially near him. Using a print factor may be helpful because not all the printing needs to be done at one particular printer.
- 12.2 The University Guidelines published by NCA need to be updated and placed on the website. CJ said this had been started in 2003 using old NCA/BCA info at [www.checc.org.uk](http://www.checc.org.uk). BM suggested that CJ would be well advised to consult with Special Committees.

### **12.3 Newsletter Editor's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

LW commented that Jim Cochrane does not receive enough information to fill the space, so he puts together a newsletter as and when he gets copy. What we need is four newsletters a year, either half empty or information needs to be chased. Officers and Special Committees should be sending information to Jim every quarter.

### **12.4 Handbook Editor's Report (2007/08)**

DW gave a verbal report. The BCA Handbook 2007/08 should be ready in a month's time. In terms of individual club details there are only email addresses and accommodation included.

***That the Publications & Information Officer's, Newsletter Editor's and Handbook Editor's reports be accepted.***

Prop. Boyd Potts. Sec. Steve Holding. ***Agreed unanimously.***

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20pm for lunch and reconvened at 1:30pm.

## **13. Legal & Insurance Officer's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

- 13.1 Underground Britain – Legal & Insurance Issues - SH observed that in mining terms this is very simplistic and not precise enough, it needs to refer people to current legislation because this changes rapidly. MD suggested that SH ask for suggestions from NAMHO as to additional information to be included. This is BCA's best selling leaflet, it was suggested that it be put on the website and printed on demand. Relevant case law should be published on the website. The problem with the existing book is that it is a BCRA publication. It had been agreed by the "Hub" that it be published in the Cave Studies series.

***That the Legal & Insurance Officer's report be accepted.***

Prop. Andy Pryke. Sec. Steve Holding. ***Agreed unanimously.***

#### **14. "Try Caving" Initiative Report** (*Written report tabled*)

- 14.1 CJ reported briefly on the progress of the Youth & Development Scheme, originally proposed at the AGM in 2006. A website at [www.trycaving.co.uk](http://www.trycaving.co.uk) was created and the initiative was officially launched at Hidden Earth with 20,000 flyers printed and distributed. He reported that 46 caving clubs had put their details on the website as being willing to help with the initiative and the "Try Caving" weekend, 26-28 May 2007. SH said that there could be more support from NAMHO if the website were amended to include more information on mining history – CJ agreed to consider this.
- 14.2 CJ expressed thanks to the many people who had helped on the BCA stand at the Outdoor Show at the NEC. The outcome of the show was a list of 200+ names of people who would like to be contacted for a 'real' caving trip, six or seven of which, led by instructors, have been organised. MD expressed his congratulations to all those who worked hard to make it a success.
- 14.3 There was considerable discussion as to alternative ways of creating the same kind of activity without building an artificial 'cave' such as the one hired from the YHA for the Outdoor Show.

*That the Youth Development Officer's report be accepted.*  
Prop. Les Williams. Sec. Jenny Potts. *Agreed unanimously.*

#### **15. Membership Administrator's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

- 15.1 Bob Mehew noted that L Bailey did have a system of operation for BCRA. Unfortunately that system was not easily transferable and did not survive the handover during 2006 when the BCA memberships were added to it.
- 15.2 There was a lengthy discussion on this with a number of unanswered questions because the Membership Administrator was unable to attend the meeting. There were difficulties in interpreting correctly the membership list supplied to the Acting Secretary for the meeting. During the course of the discussion the two main issues identified were the apparent lack of communication to members and the difficulty of obtaining prompt confirmation of payment and proof of insurance cover.

EL commented that as Conservation & Access Officer she is anxious for BCA's public image. Our organisation administers access for landowners and many insist that cavers have insurance. Without it, access systems may be in jeopardy. All clubs and access organisations need to be able to produce an appropriate insurance certificate right from the beginning of the year.

It was acknowledged that the system has unavoidable built-in delays while facilities are not in place, but this would be rectified shortly.

SH suggested that, if possible, a copy of the insurance policy be put on the website. LW to pursue this with the Insurance Manager.

After much discussion a proposal was formulated:

*That BCA Council acknowledges the problems encountered in administering membership, it apologises to its membership (now) for the difficulties that they have experienced and Council will investigate ways of improving the situation and will report back to the membership by July.*

Prop. Andy Pryke. Sec. by Simon Froude. *Agreed unanimously.*

*That the Membership Administrator's report be accepted.*

Prop. Idris Williams. Sec. Andy Pryke. *Agreed unanimously.*

## **16. Insurance Manager's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

*That the Insurance Manager's report be accepted.*

Prop. Sue Mabbett. Sec. Steve Holding. *Agreed unanimously.*

## **Other Annual Reports**

## **17. Convenor's Report, Radon Working Party** (*Written report tabled*)

17.1 All contacts with the HPA (NRBA) has been subject to delay due to the polonium investigation.

17.2 CCW money has been made available and last weekend radon detectors were purchased to be put in Agen Allwedd, Llangattock and another cave used by outdoor centres.

*That the Convenor's report be accepted.*

Prop. Steve King. Sec. Les Williams. *Agreed unanimously.*

## **18. Cave Registry Coordinator's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

18.1 The Cambrian Registry and Mendip Register are about to be published in hard copy and on the web.

*That the Cave Registry Coordinator's report be accepted.*

Prop. Steve Holding. Sec. Idris Williams. *Agreed unanimously.*

## **19. International Representative's Report** (*Written report tabled*)

*That the International Representative's report be accepted.*

Prop. Andy Pryke. Sec. Jenny Potts. *Agreed unanimously.*

## **20. Reports from BCRA, Regional Councils etc**

20.1 MD questioned whether this is still relevant. This is an opportunity for regions to report on aspects of particular importance if they wished to and it would be left on the agenda.

## **21. Election of Officers and National Council Members:**

### **21.1 Secretary, to serve for 3 years**

Candidate – SF agreed to serve, subject to having assistance, and it was agreed that he should have this.

*Secretary: Simon Froude.*

Prop. Jenny Potts. Sec. Les Williams. *Elected unopposed.*

### **21.2 Treasurer, to serve remaining year of 2-year term:**

*Treasurer: Dave Cooke.*

Prop. Jenny Potts, Sec. L Williams. *Elected unopposed.*

### **21.3 Training Officer, to serve remaining 2 years of 3-year term:**

*Training Officer: Graham Mollard.* Prop. Idris Williams. Sec. Jenny Potts.

*Elected unopposed.*

### **21.4 Conservation & Access Officer, to serve for 3 years:**

*Conservation & Access Officer: Elsie Little.*

Prop. Dave Jean. Sec. Dave Cooke. *Re-elected unopposed.*

**21.5 Legal & Insurance Officer**, to serve for 3 years:

**Legal & Insurance Officer: David Judson:**  
Prop. Elsie Little, Sec. Liam Kealy. *Elected unopposed.*

**21.6 2 Club Representatives**, to serve for 2 years:

<b>Shropshire Scouts Caving Team</b>	<b>Idris Williams</b>	<b>Elected unopposed.</b>
<b>South Wales Caving Club</b>	<b>Bernie Woodley</b>	<b>Elected unopposed.</b>

(Orpheus Caving Club - Boyd Potts and Cwmbran Caving Club - Owen Clark are happy to continue to serve for their second year).

**21.7 2 Individual Member representatives**, to serve for 2 years:

**Charles Milton.** Prop. Steve Whitlock. Sec. Jenny Potts. *Elected unopposed.*  
**Emma Porter.** Prop. Jenny Potts. Sec. Dave Cooke. *Elected unopposed.*

**21.8 2 Individual Member representatives**, to serve remaining year of 2-year term:

**Damian Weare.** Nominated by Sue Mabbett. *Elected unopposed.*  
**Steve King.** *Elected unopposed.*

3:15 Dave Jean and Alan Finch left at this point.

## **22. Proposals**

Proposal as notified in advance on the Agenda reads:

*To agree that, in so far as is possible, the subscription rates should be set up so that members make a fair contribution to the direct and indirect services that they receive.*

Prop. Dave Cooke. Sec. Jenny Potts.

- 22.1 The urgency for this proposal has come about as a result of the recent cancelling of grant aid from the Sports Council. Historically it was originally agreed that subscriptions for CIMs would cover insurance and associated costs. All other costs would be covered by the subscriptions from the other classes of membership (Clubs, DIMs) and grant aid, i.e. publications and information, equipment, administration, etc. Unfortunately this now needs to change if BCA is to survive and subscriptions are the primary route of funding for BCA.
- 22.2 To date the surplus on the insurance scheme has been placed in a ring-fenced fund to be spent on reducing the excess that a member would have to pay in the event of a claim (£10,000 - explosives / £5,000 - normal to £2,500). The fund now stands at £22,500 and is deemed to be sufficient. The fund remains ring-fenced under the proposal and can only be spent on the given purpose.
- 22.3 LW commented that he had been instructed to amend the proposal by the committee of the Wessex Caving Club and put forward a new wording. SH said that he would support this amended proposal and that it now is reasonable that Council should decide where/how monies are spent.
- 22.4 JP added that, at the Finance Committee meeting, some rules for funding Regional Councils had been discussed, as Regional Councils will no longer be collecting any money from clubs. All main funding other than publications is being paid from BCA funds so Club Individual Members are benefiting from money spent by BCA on access, training, bolt installation etc. The feeling at the DCA AGM was that a small portion of CIMs' payments should be made available to support access, bolting etc.
- 22.5 After more discussion, CJ commented that as everyone appeared to agree in principle, that the proposal should the meeting should agree wording for an amended proposal and the following was proposed:

*To agree that the subscription rates are set annually so that members fairly contribute to the direct and indirect services to which they have access.*

DC/JP accepted the proposal as amended.

**Club Vote: 11 in favour, 1 abstention.**

**Individual Vote: 13 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention.**

The Chairman declared that the motion was passed as both houses were in favour.

## **Other Matters**

### **23. Appointment of Auditor**

23.1 DC would like to move from Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services (LCVS), who have a sports service for voluntary organisations, and is still looking for a similar auditor in Somerset. Delegated to Council.

### **24. Date of Annual General Meeting for 2008**

24.1 Agreed after discussion as Saturday, 5 April 2008, subject to availability of the hall.

### **25. Any Other Business Notified in Advance to the Chairman**

25.1 None was forthcoming.

Recorder: *Karen Slatcher*

### **Appended to these Minutes and forming part of them are the following reports:**

- a. Item 6 Chairman's Report
- b. Item 7 Acting Secretary's Report
- c. Item 8 Acting Treasurer's Report
- d. Item 9 Conservation Officer's Report
- e. Item 10 Equipment & Techniques Report
- f. Item 11 Training Officer's Report
- g. Item 12 Publications & Information Officer's Report
- h. Item 13 Legal & Insurance Officer's Report
- i. Item 14 "Try Caving" Initiative Report
- j. Item 15 Membership Administrator's Report
- k. Item 16 Insurance Manager's Report
- l. Item 17 Convenor's Report, Radon Working Party
- m. Item 18 Cave Registry Coordinator's Report 2006
- n. Item 19 International Representative's Report

The meeting closed at 3:42pm.