



**Minutes of BCA Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 16th June 2013
at Castleton Rotary Club, Castleton**

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE)	Chairman / UIS Rep. / Individual Member
Paul Ibberson (PI)	Treasurer / Individual Member
Damian Weare (DW)	Secretary / Handbook Editor / Individual Member
David Judson (DJu)	Legal & Insurance Officer / Individual Member
Les Williams (LW)	Publications & Information Officer / Webmaster / Wessex CC Rep. / Individual Member
Nigel Ball (NB)	Training Officer / Individual Member
Nick Williams (NW)	Equipment & Techniques Officer / Insurance Manager / Individual Member
David Cooke (DC)	IT Working Party / Cave-Registry / Web Services / Cheddar CC Rep. / Individual Member
Jenny Potts (JP)	Publication Sales / DCA Rep. / Individual Member
Bob Mehew (BM)	Rope-Testing / Craven PC Rep / Individual Member
Dave Checkley (DCh)	BCRA Rep. / Individual Member
Geoff Dommett (GD)	CSCC Rep. / Individual Member
Helen Brooke (HB)	CHECC Rep. / Individual Member
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Rep. / Individual Member
Bernie Woodley (BW)	SWCC Rep. / Individual Member
Robin Weare (RW)	Cambrian Rep. / Individual Member
Owen Clarke (OC)	Cwmbran CC Rep. / Individual Member
Henry Rockcliff (HR)	SUSS Rep. / Individual Member
Pete Talling (PT)	Individual Member
Fleur Loveridge (FL)	PDCMG Rep / Individual Member
Annie Heaney (AH)	Individual Member
Ged Champion (GC)	FSE Rep / Individual Member
Ben Heaney (BH)	Newsletter Editor / Individual Member
Wayne Sheldon (WS)	Individual Member
Chris Jewell (CJ)	CDG Rep. / Individual Member
Matthew Wire (MW)	Individual Member
Boyd Potts (BP)	Orpheus CC Rep. / Individual Member
Trevor Faulkner (TF)	Individual Member
Ruth Allen (RA)	Individual Member
[Lillian Eavis (LE)]	Observer]

The meeting commenced at 10:45.

1. Chairman's Welcome

AE welcomed members to this Annual General Meeting and then paid tribute to Elsie Little, who sadly passed away two days previously. He noted that she was highly regarded by all who knew her and had been extremely helpful to British Caving. A minute's silence was held in her memory.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Alan Finch, Clark Friend, David Jean, Glenn Jones, CNCC, Andrew Ward, Faye Litherland, Steve Holding, Mick Day and Emma Porter.

3. Applications for Club Membership

The North Lakes Caving Club has provided the correct fee and supporting paperwork.

3.1 Proposal: *That the North Lakes Caving Club be accepted as a BCA Member Club*

Prop: HB, Sec: NB *agreed unanimously*

4. Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting (previously circulated)

4.1 Proposal: *That the Minutes from 9th June 2012 be taken as read*

Prop: JP, Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

4.2 Proposal: ***That the Minutes from 9th June 2012 be accepted as a true record***

Prop: BM, Sec: BW *agreed unanimously*

5. **Matters Arising for the Minutes of the last Council Meeting**

NW: Inaccuracy in statement about long-term agreement. It is actually 2014, rather than 2013.

Officers' Reports

6. **Chairman's Report**

This Chairman's Report is to a new style of BCA AGM meeting on the 16th June 2013 at the Rotary Centre, Castleton following a BCRA Field Meeting and joint party on Saturday 15th June. It is hoped that this new format will bring science and adventure caving more together and we will all have good fun and a constructive and well attended AGM. The Outdoor Centre at Dalesbridge in the Yorkshire Dales is already booked for the weekend 13th-15th June 2014. We will look at the following AGM 2015 meeting being in another caving region, probably the Mendips. Hopefully this new format will be successful and continue on well into the future.

Various groups have been very active over the last 12 months, particularly the Training and Equipment & Technique Committees. Within BCRA Cave & Karst Science is going from strength to strength, there are numerous excellent scientific field meetings and the Library continues to provide an excellent service to British Caving. Many thanks to all concerned.

Within the Training Committee there is an on-going discussion between commercial and sport/leisure caving. This has reached a point where we are struggling to find caves to train our BCA personnel, as this training is classed as commercial and, therefore, banned from a number of our major caves. We will shortly be proposing a guidelines document which we hope will help the situation. Conservation and safety should always be our major priorities.

The bolts conflict has now reached a point where the Regions are essentially doing their own thing, effectively split along a North/South divide. In some ways this is constructive in making sure that the situation is fully debated but we should all remember to try and be as constructive as possible.

Generally I think the BCA Council has operated efficiently and constructively and I thank my fellow officers and look forward to us all continuing to help British cavers and caving into the future.

Andy Eavis

AE: Feels that the weekend has been very successful. There are a few things to tweak for next year but generally things have gone well. Dalesbridge near Austwick has been provisionally booked for next year.

DCh: Could we consider some caving songs?

JP: Proposed a vote of thanks to all who made this weekend a great success.

Proposal: ***that the Chairman's Report be accepted***

Prop: GD, Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

7. **Secretary's Report**

Overview: *BCA is a complex and multi-layered organisation with a multitude of Committees, Regions and Constituent Bodies all doing vital work on behalf of the wider caving community.*

Despite the complexities, by and large BCA has again run fairly smoothly. The biggest frustration is always that the majority of our membership has no idea of much of the good work that is being done on its behalf (and in fact a fair chunk probably don't even realise they are even members!) In part this is down to our membership structure whereby the only contact we have with the vast majority of our membership is through our Member Clubs. However, that said, there is also no hiding from the fact that newsletters and Speleology are both highly sporadic. This means that despite most of what we do running along quite smoothly, the outward appearance to many of our members may be somewhat different - we really do need to do better at talking to our members!

Tied in with this is the ever-difficult issue of ensuring effective communication between the various Standing Committees, Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies that make up BCA's main structure. Inevitably volunteers are generally very good at doing what you want them to do - i.e. getting useful work done - but a lot less good at sitting in front of a computer and writing about it. At times this can create difficulties and I will again ask that people submit reports in good time, but overall we seem to get by pretty well as an organisation with only the occasional cock-up.

Speaking of cock-ups, I have to report that I have made several this year. All are down to the simple problem of trying to juggle too many things at once, but to the people who have been inconvenienced, I again apologise.

Access & Professional Caving: Following concerns raised by Training Committee, Council asked Executive to prepare a statement on access and commercial caving. A consultation on this brought over 12,000 words of considered responses and it is clear that there is plenty of common ground. On this basis a draft statement has been prepared which will be debated by Council in the coming months. It is hoped that this will help support the excellent work being done by BCA's Trainer-Assessors.

Changes to Manual of Operations: BCA operates according to its Manual of Operations, a document which has been developed over the last three years. This is open to regular review by Council and provides up-to-date guidance on how we should run things. Over the last year Council has approved some changes to the Disciplinary Policy and these are included in Appendix 4 for final approval by this meeting under item 25 of the Agenda.

Post of Secretary: I have been Secretary for the last 5 years and the post is up for re-election this year. When I stood again in 2010 it was in the knowledge that I would have a fair amount of time to devote to the role. Unfortunately I know that this will not be the case in the next three-year period and, as such, have intentionally not put myself forward in advance of the meeting in the hope that someone with more time feels able to take on the role. In the (probable!) absence of any other mug, I am happy that I will have enough time to complete the job satisfactorily and am, therefore, willing to stand again. It is, however, currently my intention to step down completely in 2016, so we need to be looking for someone else.

Thanks: I should like to take this opportunity to echo Andy's thanks to all who work on BCA's behalf. Your work this year has again saved Executive any number of potential headaches!

Damian Weare

AE: DW has been an excellent Secretary. We need to find someone to take over in 3 years time.

Proposal: **that the Secretary's Report be accepted**

Prop: LW, Sec: DJu agreed unanimously

8. Treasurer's Report

The last 12 months have been something of a case of two steps forward and one step back. My understanding of the processes and flows has improved and the day-to-day administration of the financial side of BCA has become easier from my point of view and, hopefully, remained smooth from a "user" perspective. Some of the progress I would have liked to have made has proved difficult to achieve; a large proportion of the frustration experienced in this respect concerns the general state of any interface with banking systems and the difficult nature of getting all your ducks lined up to effect what should be simple transactions. The time spent on this aspect of the job does significantly detract from the opportunity to get on with something more useful!

In an improvement to last year, the 2012 Accounts were prepared in a much more timely fashion and have been subjected to review by our Independent Examiner. A draft copy has been prepared for circulation with the Officers' Reports and I expect these to be formally signed off at the AGM. I am pleased to report that the Independent Examiner has indicated his willingness to continue in the role and I trust that will be acceptable to the Association.

Moving on to the 2012 accounts, the general picture is broadly similar to the previous year. A few variations are noted below, but overall the Association continues to more than meet its running costs and the Reserves position remains sound for our present view of future activities. I still retain a dual objective of improving the return on the cash reserve (this has proved difficult in a climate of falling deposit interest rates) whilst at the same time spreading the investment risk. The latter has been high on my agenda over the last year, but the number of hoops to be jumped through has been ridiculous and the task is ongoing.

Subscription income in the year increased, mainly as a result of the £1 increase for individual members implemented from 1st January. This has helped to balance the increase in general expenses arising from the increased cost of providing £5 million cover on the public liability policy. Other subscription expenses were broadly in line with the prior year. General Association running costs have increased slightly, but the impact has been mitigated by increased revenue. As noted above, improving the interest element is a continuing target.

Training Services have once more generated a small surplus. Income from the training schemes was higher than 2011 and this mirrored a rise in expenses arising from the provision and administration of those schemes.

Publications costs have reduced when compared to the previous year, with only accrued costs charged for Speleology. E&T expenses were again high as a result of the continued focus on the anchor programme and the cost of sourcing replacement anchors. It is expected that these costs will be significantly lower in 2013. Meetings expenditure reduced in the absence of the one-off costs incurred in 2011. Web Services continues to run at a small deficit with the server migration taking longer than planned. The shortfall has reduced from 2011 and should reduce again once migration is

complete.

Funding of Expeditions (via the Ghar Parau Foundation) and the British Caving Library has continued at the same level as previous years, but Regional Council costs have increased significantly. This is a direct result of the policy decision taken to get regional funding up to date on an accruals basis. The 2012 charge comprises outstanding funding claims for both 2011 and 2012. Thanks are due to the regional treasurers for their assistance in providing the 2012 detail in the shortened time frame.

Overall, the position for the year is that the Association recorded a surplus of £5,252, upon which £811 of tax is payable, thus leaving a net addition to reserves of £4,441. It is my intention to maintain the Sinking Fund at the current level for the time being, although this position will be kept under review.

Paul Ibberson

PI: There has been a notable increase in revenue from Sports Financial Services commissions from £431 in 2011 to £891 in 2012. We hold a significant cash reserve and 12 months ago we could have been achieving a significantly higher rate of return had it been in appropriate accounts, but unfortunately the available rates then reduced considerably. Having money in different accounts is still desirable, though, as it will diversify our portfolio. The real difficulty is that there are now significant hurdles involved in opening new accounts. At present all our money is with HSBC and Barclays, both of which are pretty secure. The Training heading contains one or two pre-paid expenses, which have the effect of making its financial position even more secure. Equipment & Techniques has seen high expenditure this year, but this is likely to reduce in 2013.

NW: One of the hidden benefits that our members receive is anchors.

PI: The 2011 figure for meetings was exceptionally high because of the purchase of the trailer and associated items for the artificial cave. We have been running (and paying for) two servers for some time while the Web Services team move all our sites from the old server to the new one. The work is now almost complete, so we will soon be able to save some money here.

LW: Does the figure reflect the money BCA saves by not having to pay for its own hosting?

DC: No.

PI: The major change in the 2012 accounts is the funding of the Regional Councils. There was a recommendation from the auditor in 2011 that we change the funding so that it features in the correct year's accounts. This has meant a significant additional workload for Regional Treasurers this year and they are to be thanked for their hard work. In general our financial position is actually even healthier than the surplus suggests because of a number of pre-paid items that have been included in this year's accounts.

On the Balance Sheet the stocks of old publications that were previously shown has been financially written off. The £191k of Reserves includes a sinking fund for the insurance and also for our own operating costs.

Proposal: ***that the 2012 Accounts be adopted.***

Prop: LW, Sec: DC *agreed unanimously*

AE: Would like to thank PI for an excellent job in bringing all this to the meeting today.

NW: We should also thank Richard Johnson for examining the accounts. **Action 127: DW to write to Richard Johnson.**

PI: Sourcing a new software packages is still on the agenda, but moving things on takes an inordinate amount of time. Day-to-day admin is fine though.

Proposal: ***that the Treasurer's Report be accepted***

Prop: JP, Sec: DCh *agreed unanimously*

9. **Conservation & Access Report**

AE: No report is available as a result of Elsie's untimely death.

10. **Equipment & Techniques Report**

E+T committee held meetings in March and October of 2012. On most levels these meetings were characterised by a high level of useful technical discussion and co-operation.

The major success of the year was undoubtedly identifying and testing a replacement for the DMM Eco Anchor, following extensive work by Bob Dearman, Les Sykes and Glenn Jones. One advantage of the replacement system is that so far as most cavers are concerned, it will be all-but impossible to distinguish between the new bolt and the old eco-anchors.

We have also proven that, following various enhancements, the bolt testing rig is capable of providing the data required to allow us to make reliable judgements as to the suitability of an anchor system, and I am also pleased that I think the level of expertise available to the Committee is appropriate to use the data as the basis of a sound decision. This has also

allowed us to recover effectively from the situation which arose in 2011 where a small number of anchors of Chinese origin had been placed and which subsequently proved to be below the minimum specification which we had set. (We have also been able to deal effectively with a subsequent quality control issue for the newly identified bolt but this is a 2013 matter which will be reported formally on at the 2014 AGM).

In 2012, unfortunately we yet again found ourselves diverted by arguments over the implementation of the bolting policy, the culmination of which was the withdrawal of the representatives of CNCC and DCA from the Committee, although I think it is worth nothing that E+T continues to provide financial support for bolt testing and placement in these regions. Notwithstanding the recriminations and waste of resources which have resulted from them, it also leaves BCA in the unfortunate position of having an adopted anchor placement policy which no longer reflects the activities of all regions. The Committee have therefore developed a replacement document which is a true policy document (as opposed to a training manual which is what we had before) and which can now be said to represent the actual practice in the regions. The document is appended to this report (Appendix 2) and E+T proposes that the AGM should adopt the policy in place of all previous anchor policies and other documents.

Nick Williams

TF: What is the problem with the various Regions doing different things?

NW: There is no problem at all providing our official documents do not require that they all do the same thing. This is the case until we adopt our new Policy.

DC: We should note that Faye Litherland did a lot of work on finding the replacement anchor.

NW: In actual fact Faye worked independently of Les Sykes, Bob Dearman and Glenn Jones but they all ended up finding the same company.

RW: Does not recognise two of the paragraphs in the proposed Policy as having been in the final document as agreed recently. [Post-Meeting note: RW subsequently confirmed that the paragraphs were indeed in the final document and that there is, therefore, no problem.]

NW: The new Policy exists because at a previous AGM we adopted a training and installation manual but situations have changed and what is happening in the Regions is not necessarily what the document required. There is a significant danger to the Association of having a policy that is not followed and there is, therefore, a significant need to adopt a new Policy to clarify our position. It is true that it contains less detail than the previous document, but that is actually to our advantage as an Association. Nothing in the new document prevents Regions that so choose from continuing to use the old document.

BW: Needs an explanation of the second paragraph of Section 2.

NW: There are plenty of anchors installed that are not resin anchors.

BW: It now seems to be requiring that Regions are responsible for proving alternative systems are effective.

NW: There are many different anchor systems available that are used day in day out in industry. There is nothing to say that these cannot be used in caves and the new document allows for this.

Proposal: ***that the “Association Scheme for the Placement of Designated Anchors” be formally adopted by BCA.***

Prop: NW Sec: JP *agreed nem con*

NW: Cambrian needs to clarify its representative to the E&T Committee.

a. **Rope-Test Report**

I tested some 81 samples of rope in 2012 as a basic service to cavers and took the rig to Hidden Earth. Only one set of samples remains outstanding for testing (from Block Hall in Speedwell) but is considered to be a low priority task.

A 200m length of 11mm rope was acquired for the fixed hand line experiment and seven lengths were issued for placement in various caves across the UK (Mendip, South & North Wales, Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Scotland). All but one length has been placed in 2012 (access to the outstanding location has been hindered by high water). Regrettably there has been one report of deliberate damage to one section, though fortunately the whole rope has not been lost. The first inspection is about due to take place in 2013.

Part 2 of the Long Term Rope Test is well underway and two ropes were returned in late 2012 having achieved their desired level of usage. I am awaiting the other two ropes before then testing them all to find how the rope has performed. During the year several pieces of work have been conducted on various rope test rigs and my thanks go to the Bradford Pothole Club and the Craven Pothole Club for permission to use their rigs. One piece of work indicates, as is to be expected, that using a 0.8m overall sample length on the BCA mobile rope test rig is less demanding than using a 2m sample as required by the British Standard (BS EN 1891:1998). A proposal was accepted by the E&T Committee to investigate this difference but the work has been overtaken by other events. Another piece of work looked at the differences between various knots used in Cows Tails. A proposal was also accepted by the E&T Committee to investigate

the differences between the use of a Barrel, Figure of Eight and Overhand knots. The work however did not start until 2013.

Bob Mehew

AE: Is there also a static rig?

BM: That is 2013 work so has not been reported here.

Proposal: ***that the Equipment & Techniques Reports be accepted.***

Prop: LW Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

11. **Training Report** (*written report previously circulated*)

The previous twelve months has seen numbers of people registering with the Local Cave and Mine Leader and Cave Instructor Schemes and going through various levels of assessment as follows:

LCMLA: 162 Registrations, 53 Assessments at Level 1 and 21 at Level 2, 76 Level 1 Revalidations and 22 at Level 2 revalidations

CIC: 14 Registrations, 3 Assessments and 18 Revalidations

In October 2012, after a long wait, the Training Committee was able to report that the new CIC syllabus had been published and distributed to newly qualified CIC holders. The Committee also agreed that the Training Officer would structure a set of training modules that would be available to recreational cavers. This idea has since been modified and a number of workshop titles have been agreed and some of them will start to be delivered as soon as possible. The Training Officer also reported that communications had recently resumed with SUI regarding the recognition of their leadership award in the UK. Unfortunately, since that time, communication has ceased and therefore little progress has been made. The Committee were also made aware of an enquiry into a flooding incident where a Local Cave Leader Trainer/Assessor with their candidate and clients was unable to exit a cave for a number of hours due to high water levels. The Training Officer was asked to collect statements from those people who were involved. As a result of this process and the subsequent investigation by a wider BCA Executive, it was decided that the individual in question had acted appropriately and that no further action was necessary.

The Council had resolved that all BCA award holders should also be BCA members in order to ensure that any qualified person would be covered by the BCA's umbrella insurance policy for land owner's liability. In January 2013 the Training Officer reported that the Training Committee had prepared a draft proposal on this matter at its previous meeting. The BCA Secretary also prepared a statement for public release. The Training Officer also raised the issue of workload for the Training Administrator at this meeting, following the centralisation of all LCMLA revalidations. The Administrator also felt that the work associated with the compulsory membership mentioned above would increase her workload still further. She did point out that the new laptop and up-to-date software had improved her situation considerably.

The Training Officer reported that he visited Deverell Barracks in Ripon to observe a CVF course and moderate their standards. Over 3 days the practices observed were broadly in line with Local Cave Leader Level 1 & Level 2 training courses. As a result of this visit, BCA will continue to issue LCML Level 1 & 2 training accreditation upon successful completion of this course. The moderation process will continue early in the new year. Finally, the Training Officer reported that a training grant of £100 had been awarded to the Crewe Climbing & Potholing Club to support a training course. Overall, the uptake of training grants has been low. The Training Committee feel that it is important to raise awareness with caving clubs that training grants are available and to this end a general publicity pamphlet is in the stages of production and will be sent to all BCA member clubs.

At the last Training committee meeting in May 2013, it was agreed in principle that Training Committee should coordinate the appointment of all new trainers and assessors of the Local Cave and Mine Leader Scheme and the Cave Instructor Scheme. Also, again agreed in principle, all training courses and assessments will be made notifiable to Training Committee so as to make possible a programme of moderation to ensure that the courses are being delivered appropriately in all areas. The making of courses notifiable will also assist probationary trainers and assessors in their progress of becoming ratified.

At the same meeting, the Training Committee had been asked, once again, to consider and come up with a workable method of getting all BCA award holders to become BCA members. The minutes from that meeting record that it was felt that BCA was not an inclusive organisation, in that cave access for training and assessment purposes in particular areas of the UK was not available to trainers and assessors. It was generally felt that there appeared to be little point in including award holders within a compulsory BCA membership if BCA was not willing to organise access to such caves for this subset of members. On the one hand BCA Council want inclusiveness regarding membership, but on the other hand they appear to be willing to exclude access negotiations for trainers and assessors of the BCA schemes.

- NB: One of the Local Cave & Mine Leader Award Panels (SW Panel) feels it may have to close because it is now so restricted in where it can operate. Training Committee feels BCA should be actively working towards gaining access.
- DW: Council were made aware of these concerns in January and asked Executive to investigate and report back to Council with some recommendations. Following an extensive consultation, in which some 12,000 words were received, we are now in a position to release the proposals in the next couple of weeks. It is hoped that comments can be made to the relevant representatives and the proposals can then be discussed at the October Council Meeting. It is worth noting that to a large extent BCA's hands are tied by its Constitution which puts the wishes of landowners first and foremost, with secondary guidance that any cavers negotiating access should always seek to make it as available as possible and, if renewing agreements, should try to improve access further.
- HR: Are professional cavers being offered the same as other cavers, or are there different rules?
- AE: They are technically banned from a number of the bigger systems.
- LW: If you are a landowner, it does make a difference as to whether people are there recreationally or making money from your land.
- HR: The Service they are charging for is not the cave itself, but their technical advice and experience.
- BM: In some S. Wales caves is it not the case that some Access Controlling Bodies are actually choosing to exclude professionals?
- SN: Yes, and on the Mendips. There seem to be a group of cavers who actively wish to restrict it.
- BM: Our Constitution forbids us from mediating between members without both sides asking us to do so. This means there is little we can do.
- DJu: The point not being mentioned here is conservation.
- HB: There is a big difference between people using their Awards to take groups caving, and a system being used to assess the skills and competence of potential leaders.
- AE: There are really only two motives behind restricting access, conservation and "envy", be it financial or moral.
- BM: Will there be sufficient time between publication and discussion?
- DW: The document will be published in the next couple of weeks with discussion at the Council Meeting in October.
- NB: Training Committee was asked to consider compulsory membership for Award Holders but declined to do so and wishes Council to handle it instead.
- NW: It was originally a Council decision and was then subsequently discussed at length at a Training Committee meeting with few attendees.

Proposal: *that the Training Report be accepted.*

Prop: SN, Sec: HB *agreed unanimously*

12. Publications & Information Report

Very little to report that is not covered by the various sub headings.

The main item to report was the publication of the updated Radon Book. This has taken many years to bring up to date and thanks are due to the volunteers that made this happen.

I know there are several publications in preparation from the Youth and Development Officer and also from the Training Committee.

It is still our intention to generally make all BCA Publications available for free download via the web site or for purchase as hard copy for a nominal cost. To this end I am looking at "Print on demand" services, as that will enable BCA to keep these publications current without having to hold large stocks of publications which often become out of date before they are sold.

BCA's biggest failing is communication with its members. This is predominantly due to the restricted nature of the lines of communication.

The website is our biggest asset but more could (and should) be done with it. Hopefully a revamp (currently in progress) will be completed during the year so that the site is easier to use and more friendly to view.

Unfortunately the main route of communication, the Newsletter, has been conspicuous by its absence. Hopefully this is about to change as we have a new Editor in post and a newsletter is currently in production.

The main communication problems are that most of BCA's members are via their clubs (CIMs) and BCA is reliant on clubs to pass on communications to their members or for the club members to take the initiative and look for info on the web site. I feel this could be improved and I am sure this is something we will be looking at closely in the forthcoming year.

- CJ: The final paragraph hints at a problem that CJ has raised many times: we do not collect our members' e-mail addresses. This means we cannot communicate effectively with our membership.
- DJu: Legally we need specific permission for e-mail addresses.
- NW: It really is not as easy to do as it looks. There is a Data Protection requirement as described by DJu. There is also the problem that people do not keep their information up to date.
- TF: Some people have objected to their addresses being displayed in the To: box of group e-mails TF has sent out in the past. Consequently TF asked Birmingham University's legal advisors for the legal position on this. It seems the Information Commissioner has ruled that this is not a correct use of e-mail addresses.
- AE: This has more to it than initially meets the eye and it is clearly something Council needs to consider in the future.
- LW: BCA does a massive amount of work and BCA does not report on it well. At present we are totally dependent on communicating through our Member Clubs and this is sometimes done very well and sometimes very badly. This is something we really need to address.
- DC: There are technical solutions that remove the problems of consent. The meeting needs to make the decision on whether we wish to communicate with our members effectively. We can then consider how this is best achieved.
- HB: This weekend shows how communication works with young people – Facebook and other social-networking sites have brought loads of young people. HB is a member of a number of BCA clubs but has not had anything from any of them relating to this weekend. We need to change the way we communicate if we are to develop.
- JP: DCA uses e-mail to communicate with its members and some actively choose to not give their addresses. However the vast majority of the Orpheus CC and DCA do now have e-mail addresses.
- BM: One of the changes made to our Constitution was to allow us to include electronic communication in the future.

Proposal: ***that Council explore the best way to introduce direct electronic communication with our membership.***
Prop: DW Sec: DC agreed unanimously

a. **Webmaster's Report**

The website is the main method of communicating with our members, and to the wider caving and mine exploring community. It is currently being revamped and upgraded, which will hopefully make it more user friendly, allow a better integration of the various online services that BCA offers, and also will make the site more resilient, allowing it to be kept up to date and also be better for disaster recovery, with the easier use of regular back ups to protect content. The roll out of the new site should happen some time later this year.

Many thanks are due to Damian Weare for his almost single handed work in keeping the site up to date - a massive and thankless task.

Les Williams

LW: Both DW and Mary Wilde keep the website up to date. Mary is paid to do this but DW is not. He deserves big thanks for this.

b. **Web Services Report**

The BCA Web Server performed well during the year with only 2 unscheduled outages totalling 6 hours. We have 69 domains registered through BCA Web Services of which 59 have websites hosted by us. The BCA funds 16 of those websites including the Regional Councils, BCRA, BCRA's Special Interest Groups, the Caving Library and some of the cave rescue organisations.

By popular demand payment by electronic bank transfer is now accepted. This is particularly useful for the small value charges that frequently occur. My thanks to Katie Eavis for handling the banking at Great Hucklow and updating the automated invoicing system accordingly.

The task of transferring the websites to our Memset server and finishing with the Fasthost server is essentially done. The final website has been transferred and is only awaiting the owner's approval to complete. Thanks are due to Matt Voysey who joined the select Web Services team this year. He has been of great assistance with the transfers, a task I hope we never have to repeat.

David Cooke

DC: There is now only one domain remaining before we have finally completed the transfer of the domains. This has taken a number of years and has involved an awful lot of work.

c. **Newsletter Report**

Unfortunately we have not had a Newsletter Editor in post for some time, so the only Newsletter we have managed to publish was in January 2013 and I am indebted to Damian Weare and David Gibson for putting this together.

We now have a Newsletter Editor, so hopefully we can get a more regular schedule for future newsletters.

Les Williams

- LW: The newsletter is really important. The content needs to come from the Special Committees. The new Editor is Ben Heaney.
- BH: Please let me know about anything I can report, including techniques and access changes.
- AE: Erin is determined she would like to continue her role in Speleology. She has made a number of promises but they do not appear to always happen. Hugh Penney has been appointed as UK Commissioning Editor and could potentially work well with her.
- NW: Pressure needs to be put on Erin and maybe Hugh's role needs looking at in this respect.
- GC: It would be great to have an editor who is actually British.
- DCh: It would be good for BCA to put some articles in Speleology. At present BCRA does but there is little from BCA.
- AE: We will look at the problem of *Speleology* over lunch.

d. **Handbook Report**

The 2013 Handbook was delivered to members in July 2012 and the online version remains available for free download. Work on the 2014 Handbook is underway and the aim will be for it to be with members by the end of July. I remain of the view that in the modern era we should be aiming to rationalise the content of the website and the Handbook in favour of keeping an up-to-date website. I note that the March Council meeting seemed to largely agree with me.

Damian Weare

- NW: We do not seem to have a strategy for dealing with communication in general. This is tied to this.
- JP: As a member it is good to have something in your hand.
- LW: In the last year the Handbook is the only tangible benefit DIMs have had.
- HB: We need to make it so that you have to opt in for a paper copy with everyone else receiving an electronic version.
- DJu: It is very helpful to have something concrete to hand to our members.
- LW: A functional membership section of our website would improve so many things. We need to work towards it.

Proposal: ***that the Publications & Information Reports be accepted.***

Prop: GD Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

13. **Legal & Insurance Report**

DJu: There has been some ongoing work on the Child Protection Policy. The result is that a number of minor amendments have been considered by Council and are being tabled today for the meeting's approval.

Item 26 was then moved to this part of the Agenda.

Proposal: ***that we accept the updated version of the Child Protection Policy.***

Prop: DJu Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

BM: Have you do anything else on legal matters in 2012?

DJu: Is doing lots of things, but prefers not to shout about it.

Proposal: ***that the Legal & Insurance Report be accepted.***

Prop: DCh, Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

Other Reports

14. **Membership Administrator's Report**

BCA Membership to 1st June 2013

DIMs (Caving):367 (Non-caving):47 (DIMs incl. BCRA: 240 (includes 9 student discount), CIM Plus: 6

Honorary (BCRA): 7 (BCA): 1

CIMs (Caving): 3773 (Student): 487 (Non-caving): 966

Clubs: 160

Associates: 6

Access: 8

Membership Trends: The table below shows membership trends since BCA's formation. It is important to note that data for 2004 and 2005 is presented in a different format to that currently employed, but I believe the figures for those years are accurate enough for comparison. There is no reliable data for 2006.

829 new membership numbers were issued during 2012: 12,271 - 13101.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
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DIMs	93	185		437	432	397	487*	505*	507*
CIMs	3,523	3,909		4,965	5,216	5,115	5,296	5,435	5,397
Clubs	89	140		153	152	160	166	189	159

**Including 21 CIM Plus members in 2010, 12 in 2011 and 9 in 2012*

Glenn Jones

LW: Is it worth noting that 30 Member Clubs fell away in 2012?

DJu: Maybe it is more the case that 2011 was a blip, than that 2012 saw a drop.

CJ: Do the CIM figures add up to the figure quoted in the table?

DW: The figures given at the start of the report are for 2013 to date. A fair number apparently join each year at the back end of the year. We offer pro-rata reductions.

HR: The University Clubs have a spike in their membership in September/October every year.

DCh: The figures for BCRA student membership are disappointing given that it is actually free and all that is required is to tick the box.

CJ: There are very few CIM Plus members – we need to encourage more clubs to offer it.

NW: What we really need is a wholesale review of the system but this is far from trivial. To date we have simply tinkered making things more complex.

AE: We will try to progress the review in the coming year.

HB: What is “Access”?

DW: Access Controlling Bodies.

Proposal: ***that the Membership Administrator's Report be accepted.***

Prop: JP, Sec: DCh *agreed unanimously*

15. Insurance Manager's Report

Thankfully another quiet year from an insurance point of view. The introduction of a £5m indemnity limit has ultimately turned out to be both uncontroversial and affordable.

We are now in year two of a three-year long-term agreement with our main insurers, Zurich. The insurance market is now considerably more competitive than it has been in recent years and I would therefore recommend that the Association should identify a task force which can look at the various options and alternatives with a view to being in a position to ensure we continue to obtain the best policy on the best terms when the long-term agreement expires at the end of 2014.

There is a growing demand for other insurance services within the BCA membership, and while I think there is currently little appetite for the upheaval that trying to organise a comprehensive BCA badged travel policy would require, there is certainly mileage in looking at providing a centralised BCA property insurance scheme for clubs with huts. This would not only have cost advantages for the clubs concerned, but would also potentially ensure seamless cover when integrated with the PL policy.

I've made a start on this but due to work and family commitments, I no longer have the time to deal with this properly and the service received by Association members has, I think, suffered accordingly. Furthermore, by the end of 2013 I will have been responsible for the PL scheme for over 10 years and I think it is time that someone else took over. Therefore, while I am happy to brief a group tasked with looking at both this and the PL scheme, the Association will need to find someone else to take on the role of Insurance Manager from the end of 2013.

Nick Williams

NW: Nothing to add but would draw members' attention to the final sentence. We need someone else.

Proposal: ***that the Insurance Manager's Report be accepted.***

Prop: LW, Sec: HB *agreed unanimously*

16. Radon Report (written report previously circulated)

Once the Radon Booklet had been published I attempted to stand down on the basis that it would be an opportunity for a different person with a new set of ideas to react to the new demands from the greater world and to build towards the next revamp. As far as I can see, I commenced work in this post in 1994 and I do believe that it is important that posts do not become the 'possession' of one person for a very long time. It is acceptable to do the job more than once but very long stretches are not good.

I presented a talk at 'Hidden Earth' which generated discussion after the talk and then during the rest of the event, but no follow-up enquires were fielded. From talks at the meeting, I attempted to assist the Grampian SG and the Nenthead project, for which BCA granted the costs of 5 detectors to each project. Sadly, I had temporarily lost contact with my contact at the HPA (having been ill) and the detectors ordered did not get to Nenthead. Hopefully we can get this off the ground during the year. Grampian SG were attempting to obtain matching funds and I have not heard any more from

them regarding their efforts.

The year again has returned to one of no enquiries from either individuals or external bodies. So, despite the new booklet – easily available on the web – and wider publicity at ‘Hidden Earth’, there has been no improvement in the communications from the caving world. The AGM might like to consider why this is.

I repeat that I have been convenor now for some considerable time and am happy to call this my last year. I am unable to attend the AGM this year due to a prior engagement and offer apologies.

Clark Friend

Proposal: **that the Radon Report be accepted.**

Prop: JP, Sec: DJu agreed unanimously

17. Cave Registry Report

During the last year the Cave Registry Data Archive (www.cave-registry.org.uk) has received a new front-end courtesy of Andrew Atkinson. The site is now far easier to navigate and comprehend. The message to get out to all surveyors is that the Archive is the natural home for all raw survey data. Not only does the Archive provide a safe backup but it ensures data is not lost to future generations as had so often happened in the past. Data is not necessarily public, it can be held behind a secure password. Tools and working methods are provided to aid multi-surveyor, multi-cave and multi-revision projects.

A presentation on the purpose and use of the archive was made by Julian Todd at Hidden Earth.

We had had an enquiry from the New Zealand cavers if they can also use the archive. A request I'm keen to support (for a small charge).

Moves are a foot in Devon to set up a cave registry initially similar to the Cambrian registry. I'm providing advice and the necessary software.

David Cooke

DC: Surveyors please put your data on the archive, as at least one of your backup methods.

Proposal: **that the Cave Registry Report be accepted.**

Prop: GD Sec: HB agreed unanimously

18. IT Working Party

The BCA's website is in the progress of being ported to new software that will provide a fresher look and make it easier to update the content. The prototype can be seen at www.british-caving.org.uk/wiki3.

The BCA Forum was upgraded to the latest version of the software. Thanks are due to Les Williams and David Gibson for helping to administer the forum and delete the spammers.

I've responded to several requests for help and advice during the year.

Otherwise it has generally been a quiet year with no major projects started.

David Cooke

Proposal: **that the IT Working Party Report be accepted.**

Prop: GD Sec: HB agreed unanimously

19. Youth & Development

The year has been up and down. The Try Caving website does not work and still needs a contents update. I am technologically rubbish and people who have said they will help for free do not have the time to do all of it, so I think we need to spend some money to make it better..... gasp, splutter etc.

I need to get some new leaflets printed and had some ideas but left them at the last Council meeting and then moved to Glasgow. Sorry!

I took a proposal to the last Council Meeting about an Adopt a Caving Club scheme. I had no constructive feedback, but equally no go ahead either. I think this scheme is the most important thing and really do want to get it out ASAP but feel in limbo with it.

Adopt a Caving Club!

- Members' rates for accommodation, but only for current students. This will mean that after you have finished your degree, masters, PhD you can no longer pay members' rates, and will then hopefully remember to join!
- Invitations to social events, club parties, BBQs etc
- Put the current Chair/ President of the Uni club onto the club's E-mail list
- Inclusion in club trips, expeditions as well as trips to local caves.
- A commitment to do two things together each year.
- A commitment to take the student clubs caving to help support and share expertise.
- Display an adoption certificate signed by both clubs.

I have also been thinking about getting a set of helmets with lamps to lend out at Try Caving weekends

a) Should we get some? Will they be helpful or not?

b) Can anyone help me get them on the cheap?

Apart from these this not much has happened. I gave a talk at Hidden Earth that was poorly attended and mainly by people who were my friends and peers, which was disappointing at best.

Getting more people into caving is something I really believe in but me and my soap box need help. This year I would like to set up a group to deal with getting people into caving, looking at the issues and moving it forward, but the whole of the caving world needs to be on board. We were all on our first trip/ visit to a hut once WE are all ambassadors for caving, so let's show them how good it really is!

I am also the Chair of CHECC (yes, those students!) and CHECC is important for the future of caving, so please, please take them caving when they're staying with you. They are really very nice

My objectives for 2013 include:

- Get some really good posters made for clubs and individuals to put up.
- Sort out the website – it's rubbish and half of it doesn't work!
- Get new leaflets made.
- Starting the "Adopt a Caving Club" scheme.
- Try and find more people to help out Scout caving.
- To see if we can do anything to get cadets into caving? If anyone has an idea, please talk to me.
- To get people to believe that caves are bigger than two inches and that they could give it a go.
- Find out how to get to the meetings from Glasgow as it is sooo far.

HB: Could the meeting give some guidance on whether the "Adopt a Club" idea is a good one?

CJ: Brilliant idea and go ahead full-steam.

HB: The leaflets need doing and will be sorted soon. The Try Caving website needs a web editor and a voluntary one does not seem to be forthcoming.

CJ: You really need to take a figure and a list of requirements for the new website to Council for approval.

HR: If we're having a website, then a business card is probably a better solution than a leaflet. The website is the critical bit where information should be kept. Leaflets end up on the floor, but business cards go into wallets and people then use them to look at the website. Caving lights and helmets might be better done by entering into some kind of agreement with caving shops that already stock hire lamps. That removes liability issues and also the ongoing replacement costs.

LW: The key here will be identifying a procedure.

Proposal: *that the Youth & Development Report be accepted.*

Prop: LW Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

20. International Representative's Report

Since the last BCA Council Meeting I have revisited Brno in the Czech Republic in my capacity as President of the International Union of Speleology to finally check out the facilities and help in any way I could with the arrangements for the International Congress of Speleology which takes place from 20-27 July this year.

I noted at the time there were already 800 delegates registered and they were hoping to hit the target of 2,000 total at the Congress.

Everything seems to be well on schedule with a lot of people working very hard towards the sporting and scientific programmes. I am looking forward to this meeting immensely and hope that as many of you as possible will attend what will be an incredibly enjoyable week.

I go to New Zealand to an ACKMA Meeting on the 12th May then to Jenolan Australia to an Australian Speleology Meeting on the 25th May. I am promoting the International Union and helping Australia prepare the bid for the next Congress in 2017.

Early arrangements for the European Congress in England in 2016 are progressing. We await confirmation of the venue before detailed planning can commence.

Andy Eavis

AE: The International Congress is in 5 weeks time. There are now over 1000 registered, which should translate into 2,000 by the time of the event. AE has been offered a large stand at the price of a small one and having now been approached by some vendors, it is likely that this will develop into a British pavilion.

DCh: Are there any other groups that might wish to be represented on the stand?

HR: Ghar Parau.

a) **FSE Report**

Since the last AGM there have been two international meetings of the FSE, comprising three bureau meetings and a General Assembly Meeting (GAM). The GAM took place at the Swiss National Congress of Speleology in Muotathal in Eastern Switzerland on 29th September. The second major gathering took place at Millau near Montpellier. This event was organised by the French Federation of Speleology (FFS) to celebrate their 13th anniversary and took place from 8th-20th May this year. European countries were requested to provide brief history of the development of their national organisations in their respective countries. BCA's was formatted on to a poster.

At the GAM in September in Muotathal, following the resignation of the former Treasurer, a new Treasurer and Vice-Treasurer were elected. The office of Vice-Treasurer is a new position on the bureau. The position was created to help shadow the Treasurer in the event of the Treasurer being unable to carry out their function. The office of auditor was also created. Henk Goutia (Netherlands) was elected Treasurer, Ernest Geyer Vice Treasurer(Austria) & Jean Claude Theis (Luxembourg) as auditor. It was recognised that the auditor's position must be outside of the bureau.

This year's GAM was to be held in Millau but has now been postponed to November in Casola Italy due to a number of reasons. A matter of months before the Millau meeting the French delegate who is also General Secretary of the FSE was dismissed by the FFS, which also called upon the FSE to remove him from his position as secretary on the FSE. This presented difficulties for the FSE bureau and a decision was taken to consult the membership countries who agreed unanimously that it was unconstitutional for one country (France) to make such a demand. His fate will therefore be decided in Casola when elections for Secretary will take place.

The main issues for this year are as follows:

1) Two new member countries have now joined the existing 24 in the FSE . They are Moldova and Ukraine. Denmark and Macedonia have not renewed their membership

2) International Caving Expedition database(ICE-db): Report will be finalised soon. A call for volunteers will be sent in order to help to the update of the database.

3) The European Cave Protection Committee's (ECPC) work and Budget was reviewed. Elsie Little for UK continues to be copied into developments /policy

4) Shale Gas work group : The letter has been sent to the European Commission. No reply has been received yet.

5) Euro Speleo Projects Report presented . No actual applications from UK but UK cavers have participated in a number of expeditions that have received FSE support

6) Organisation of EuroSpeleo events :

- ES forum 2013, at 21-28th July (16th UIS congress) in Brno, Czech Republic*
- ES Forum & GAM of FSE in Casola Italy 2nd November.*
- ES Forum 2014 will be in Romania. Details will follow*
- ES Forum 2015 Applications will be invited. Bulgaria has expressed an interest.*
- European Congress 2016 will be held in UK*

7) Speleo-TV project. The workgroup comprises 7 people from 5 countries. Elina Saarinen (Finland) has been officially nominated by the Bureau as co-ordinator of the workgroup (for 2012-2016).

8) EuroSpeleo Magazine: The workgroup includes 15 people from 7 countries. Mihaela Micula (Romania) has been

officially nominated by the Bureau as chief editor of the FSE magazine (for 2012-2016). Her team has produced an excellent online magazine.

9) Christian Dodelin from France proposed the creation of a new commission which will concentrate on cave rescue issues in Europe. The commission will aspire to help improve standards for new countries joining the FSE who do not have established cave rescue organisations. Also the commission will create a database with information regarding specialisms that various countries can offer if needed.

Ged Campion

GC: Things are running very smoothly financially. The ICPC is probably the most active Commission and Elsie Little did a lot of work on that.

TF: What did the shale gas letter say?

GC: It raises the FSE's concern that there are karst areas in Europe that might well be affected by fracking. GC has liaised with Tony Waltham and is aware that there is not much to worry about in Britain.

Proposal: ***that the International Representatives' Reports be accepted.***

Prop: BM, Sec: TF agreed unanimously

21. Media-Liaison Report

In order to prepare my report for the AGM I thought I'd simply look back through my last reports to the council. This is when it struck me that it has been a quiet year for me as media liaison officer and a very busy year personally. This has mean I've missed several council meeting due to expedition caving commitments.

Throughout the year I've continued to field phone calls whenever caving has hit the headlines. Last September the media got excited about Reservoir hole and then in early Jan I spoke to a TV production company which was trying to pitch an idea.

Mainly the job continues to be a reactive one and I rely on cavers to generate their own publicity when they want it (and leave them alone when they don't!)

I am happy to continue as media liaison officer however if there are any young keen cavers who want to get involved with BCA council and want this particular role I'd happily step aside and find other ways to contribute to the council.

Chris Jewell

CJ: When CJ stepped down from his Youth & Development work and took on the media-liaison role, it was an active decision to switch from a pro-active to a reactive role. It is generally quiet with the occasional few days of phone calls following an item of news that interests the various media outlets.

LW: We need to be careful that we have someone with suitable experience of media work and British Caving so any potential young volunteer probably needs to be an apprentice.

Proposal: ***that the Media-Liaison Reports be accepted.***

Prop: HB, Sec: LW agreed unanimously

22. British Caving Library

The re-cataloguing of the older material in the Library continues in parallel with cataloguing new material incoming. We continue to exchange duplicate copies of material with other caving libraries and are grateful to the many donors of caving material, both old and new. We continue to encourage all caving clubs to send their current publications to the British Caving Library to ensure that we have complete and up to date collections covering the whole country.

The use made of the Library continues to increase with both callers in person and enquiries by email, phone and post; interest is also created through the website and the Library Facebook pages maintained by our Librarian, Mary Wilde. The Audio Archive linked to the Library website, maintained by John Gardner, continues to expand rapidly, creating great interest. We are also beginning to host other archive material, including an embryonic online archives website; and also have a link to the BGS website which now has an online catalogue of the BCRA Simpson Archive collection. The Simpson Archive itself is kept at BGS and has not yet been digitised; BCRA is still seeking funding to enable this to be done.

The 5-year Library Business Plan, drawn up originally in 2009, to identify how far we have met our original objectives is still in the process of being updated. Proposed improvements in facilities at the Library have come thick and fast in the last year, thanks mainly to donations by interested cavers, so it has not been necessary to spend money on these. Our problem is lack of staffing to make the best use of our facilities and complete the re-cataloguing and we are looking to find more volunteers and may even consider employing an extra person short term to deal with the backlog.

Jenny Potts

- HB: How long do we think it will take to catalogue everything?
- JP: Effectively we know where everything is, but it is not yet on the online catalogue. We have some previous catalogues and it is now a matter of cataloguing them electronically. We are therefore hoping to pay someone else to do this.
- PI: Of course we do not pay Mary's library work but instead provide a grant to BCRA for them to use as they see fit.
- JP: Mary also works as our Training Administrator and was originally employed by the Library as an Assistant for 5 hours, but then took on 10 additional hours following the departure of our Librarian. She would really like to scale back her hours.
- AE: It is really up to BCRA to make this happen.
- DCh: We believe we stand a good chance of raising the £60k we will need for scanning the archive material?
- HR: Does the Library collect statistics on usage?
- JP: Yes.
- HR: It would be useful to have these reported.

Proposal: *that the British Caving Library Report be accepted.*

Prop: DCh, Sec: NB *agreed unanimously*

23. Reports from BCRA, Regional Councils etc

CSCC

GD: Another quiet year. Sludge Pit Hole is due to open on 3rd July following discussions with the new landowner and digging, stabilising, gating and both. Currently Nine Barrows is gated and the landowner is waiting to see how Sludge Pit goes. Heale Farm Cave access has been agreed with the farmer and CSCC is looking to see if a CSCC lock can be installed on the gate. Works have been completed on gates at Priddy Green Sink, Thrupe Lane and Sludge Pit. When there is a spell of good weather Viaduct Sink and Compton Martin Ochre Mine will also be completed. White Pit is then next on the list.

DCh: Are the gates bat friendly?

GD: Yes. Rhino Rift is still unstable - do not go below the top of the 3rd pitch. Work is planned for Loxton Cavern, Swildon's Hole, Priddy Green Sink and Longwood Valley Sink. Longwood Sink has already been dug out to reduce flooding in the Cheddar Gorge. Conservation work has taken place in Nine Barrows Swallet, Reservoir Hole and Upper Flood Swallet. CSCC has a new bolting policy, but currently no training officer. There are some concerns over quarrying on Portland. The Council has declined CSCC's request to be include on the statutory consultee list but a local contact is keeping an eye out. Finally, the CSCC handbook is being updated and there is an intention to have posters promoting CSCC ready for Hidden Earth.

BM: How much of the work has been funded through BCA?

PI: Most of that work is on the current claim. There are a few things on regional funding that need looking at by Council. We had budgeted £5k but currently C&A spending exceeds this. This needs looking at.

SN: If we are paying, then surely we can have a say in the access.

LW: You can put stipulations in place, but in turn there may then be no access.

BCRA

DCh: Thanks to everyone who attended the Field Meets yesterday. The next event will be on the significance of the Porcellanous Bed to cave formation in the Yorkshire Dales.

DCA

JP: DCA's Annual Report is on the website. Dave Webb has stepped down from his role as Conservation Officer. DCA will run a stall at the Cliffhanger event again and is hoping BCA will fund it. It is being co-ordinated by Boyd Potts who is looking for volunteers to help run the event.

24. Election of Officers

- 24.1 Secretary: Damian Weare (Prop: LW Sec: AE) *elected unopposed.*
- 24.2 Conservation & Access Officer: AE: We need to reflect on this and co-opt someone at the next Council Meeting.
- 24.3 Legal & Insurance Officer: David Judson *elected unopposed.*
- 24.4 2 Club Representatives: David Cooke (Cheddar CC) *elected unopposed* and Emma Porter (Prop: DJu Sec: DC) *elected unopposed*
- 24.5 4 Individual Member Representatives: (2 for 2 years) Bernie Woodley (Prop: LW Sec: OC) *and* Henry Rockcliff (Prop: CJ Sec: HB) *both elected unopposed*, (plus 2 for 1 remaining year of a 2-yr term) Ruth Allen (Prop: CJ Sec: LW) *and* Matt Wire (Prop: CJ Sec: HB) *both elected unopposed*

Other Matters

25. Approval of Amendments to Manual of Operations

Proposal: *that the amendments to the Manual of Operations be accepted*

Prop: NW Sec: LW agreed unanimously

26. Approval of Updates to Child-Protection Policy

Taken earlier under Legal & Insurance Report

27. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Proposal: *that Richard Johnson be appointed as Independent Examiner for the 2013 Accounts.*

Prop: PI Sec: NW agreed unanimously

28. Date of 2014 AGM

Proposal: *that the 2014 AGM be held over the weekend of 14th-15th June at 10:30am.*

Prop: DCh Sec: LW agreed unanimously

29. Any Other Business

JP Tabled a paper on access to land covered by CRoW legislation:

It would seem that the situation as regards access for cavers on CRoW land does warrant some further investigation, given that the opinion given by David Judson on behalf of NCA/BCA some years ago is being quoted by a landowner to cavers. There are some who feel that this opinion may be questioned and there is now some documentary evidence to support an alternative view.

I would like to put the following proposal to the AGM as a sensible way to approach this:

That BCA investigates the position with regard to access to caves on CRoW land in England and reports back to BCA Council as soon as possible.

I would suggest that the investigation should start by listing all the caves known currently to be on CRoW land in England and recording whether access is currently:

- 1. Administered on behalf of the landowner/tenant by some type of access organisation run by cavers and open only to clubs and, if so, by whom it is administered (i.e. regional council, management committee or club);*
- 2. Administered on behalf of the landowner/tenant by some type of access organisation run by cavers etc. and open to both clubs and individuals.*
- 3. Managed by the landowner/tenant who requires cavers ask their permission and expects them to make the request via their club;*
- 4. Managed by the landowner/tenant who requires cavers ask their permission and is prepared to grant it to individual cavers;*
- 5. Is effectively free and open to all without any permission being required from anyone.*

It would also be worth recording whether either Natural England is involved in any way in the arrangements listed above or has given advice on them.

Once you have a clear idea of the situation overall as it is now and, given that there may well be a number of sites covered by no. 5 above, it would then be possible to have a sensible debate on:

- a) Whether the present situation is regarded as unsatisfactory by a substantial majority of cavers and needs to be challenged in some way; or*
- b) Whether the present situation is felt to be generally satisfactory but some concerns need to be addressed.*

If a) above turns out to be the case, then BCA would have a clear mandate to go about attempting to change things.

This isn't a recipe for quick action but it should enable cavers to see whether there really is a problem which needs to be addressed or whether it is simply a few unhappy people complaining.

Jenny Potts

BCA Individual Member

Note that I would suggest also that, if the proposal is passed, the best way to get things going would be to set up an informal working party composed of representatives from the English Regional Councils, cave

scientists and other interested bodies to do the fact-finding and start the discussions, initially via a closed list on the internet. This will require someone to act as Convenor in the first instance and, in the absence of other offers, I would be willing to do this myself.

- JP: There has been a lot of discussion on UKCaving and other circles about this. JP thinks it deserves investigation and wants to limit it to England. The original view by NCA was that The CRoW Act did not cover caving, but we now have reason to believe it might, including a Natural England commissioned report from 2009 that refers to caving as an activity covered by the CRoW Act.
- DJu: Has just found out about this because Elsie Little was dealing with it. This is something that was investigated quite thoroughly. Initially it was felt that we should go along with the BMC view that vertical rock is the same as horizontal land and therefore is covered by CRoW legislation. However the prevailing view of NCA was that this would mess up long-standing agreements with landowners and would not be beneficial to cavers. DJu feels the view has worked well in the intervening years and is not aware that the original situation has changed.
- LW: The legislation does allow for restrictions to be put in place if it is felt they are needed for effective conservation.
- LW: The background is that there has been significant discussion on UKCaving forum and many seem to feel BCA does not represent its members' views at present. Given this we should support the proposal.
- BM: Concern has been expressed to me by one Club that there should be no imputation that this will result in us challenging existing access agreements at this stage. We should investigate but go no further than that.
- DJu: We need to ensure we contact the relevant people properly.
- NW: Would like the investigation to carefully consider the different groups who may be affected.
- JP: Envisages being able to report to the January meeting.
- OC: It should be remembered that the cave entrance and the body of the cave are two different things.

Proposal: ***That BCA investigates the position with regard to access to caves on CRoW land in England and reports back to BCA Council as soon as possible.***

Prop: JP Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

- TF: It seems that a lot of detail has been considered at this AGM. In most organisations AGMs take about an hour but this meeting seems to go into a lot of unnecessary detail.
- CJ: Disagrees – if the purpose was to rubber stamp reports and discussion was not allowed, nobody would come at all.
- BM: It is very irritating not to have reports well in advance of meeting dates. It makes it virtually impossible to properly discuss things without sufficient time. The Annual Meeting is about the previous calendar year so there is a gap of 6 months between the end of the year and this meeting. Surely reports can be published earlier to give representatives time to consult the groups they represent?
- CJ: Surely reports should be from AGM to AGM rather than calendar year to calendar year.
- HR: A delay is useful because it allows considered reflection.

Action 128: that Council consider the reporting year.

Meeting ended: 14:14

**BRITISH
CAVING
ASSOCIATION**

Financial Statements for the Year
Ended 31 December 2012

**BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012**

	2012	2011
	£	£
INCOME		
Subscriptions	98,707	95,384
Association	3,193	2,644
Training Services	22,726	18,150
Publications & Information	696	293
Web Services	1,339	1,348
TOTAL INCOME	<u>126,661</u>	<u>117,819</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Subscription	55,658	49,645
Association	4,810	4,007
Training Services	22,134	17,585
Caver Training	233	240
Publications & Information	5,100	7,691
Equipment & Techniques	5,912	4,732
Youth Development	128	0
Meetings & Conferences	685	5,356
Web Services	1,793	1,985
Regional Caving Councils	9,325	3,870
British Caving Library	10,000	10,000
Expedition Programme	5,000	5,000
International	631	303
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>121,409</u>	<u>110,414</u>
<u>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</u>	<u>5,252</u>	<u>7,405</u>
TAX	811	552
<u>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR AFTER TAX</u>	<u>4,441</u>	<u>6,853</u>

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2012**

	2012	2011
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	0	322
Debtors and Prepayments	428	408
Balances at Bank and cash in hand	191,415	180,012
	<u>191,843</u>	<u>180,742</u>
LESS: CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors and Accruals payable within one year	25,574	18,914
NET ASSETS	<u><u>166,269</u></u>	<u><u>161,828</u></u>

REPRESENTED BY RESERVES :

General Reserve		
Balance brought forward	101,828	102,975
Surplus for year	4,441	6,853
	<u>106,269</u>	<u>109,828</u>
less transfer to Sinking Fund	<u>0</u>	<u>8,000</u>
	106,269	101,828
Sinking Fund - insurance policy excess	60,000	60,000
TOTAL RESERVES	<u><u>166,269</u></u>	<u><u>161,828</u></u>

Approved on behalf of the Executive Committee

A Eavis, Chairman_____
Date**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012**

1 Accounting Policies**a) Basis of Accounting**

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and under historical cost accounting rules.

b) Equipment

Equipment is charged in the accounts in the year of purchase.

c) Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

2 Additional Notes

- a) BCA is required to cover part of the insurance policy excess itself, in order to make membership attractive. This is the purpose of the 'sinking fund'. The sinking fund should be able to cope with paying the excess for two claims and a doubling of the premium in one year. With an increased premium due for 2012, the value of the sinking fund reserve was increased to £60,000 in 2011. It has been maintained at the same level for 2012.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

I report on the accounts of the association for the year ended 31 December 2012 which are set out on pages 2 & 3.

Respective responsibilities of executive committee and examiner

As members of the association's executive committee you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; it is my responsibility to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

The examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the association and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as executive committee members concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep proper accounting records or to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name: **Richard Johnson**

Address: **Burrs Cottage, Great Hucklow, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 8RF**

Dated: **May 2013**

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2012

	2012	2011
	£	£
Subscriptions		
<i>Income</i>		
Subscriptions	98,707	95,384
<i>Total</i>	<u>98,707</u>	<u>95,384</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Premium	39,404	31,835
Employment Expenses	7,589	7,908
General Expenses	3,377	4,690
Refunds, Adj, Unpaid	100	0
BCRA Subscriptions	5,188	5,212
<i>Total</i>	<u>55,658</u>	<u>49,645</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>43,049</u>	<u>45,739</u>
Association		
<i>Income</i>		
Interest received	2,143	2,162
Broker Commission	891	431
Donations, Sundry	159	51
<i>Total</i>	<u>3,193</u>	<u>2,644</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Secretarial	1,147	573
Travel	2,204	2,273
Subscriptions	774	508
Insurance	685	653
<i>Total</i>	<u>4,810</u>	<u>4,007</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(1,617)</u>	<u>(1,363)</u>

Training Services**Income**

LCMLA / CIC Schemes	22,681	18,025
Publications	45	125
<i>Total</i>	<u>22,726</u>	<u>18,150</u>

Expenditure

Employment Expenses	8,514	7,671
General Expenses	4,505	2,273
Travel	1,833	2,301
LCMLA/CIC Training	6,960	5,016
Refunds, Adj, Unpaid	0	163

Stock @ 1/1/12	322	
Less Closing Stock @ 31/12/12	0	<u>161</u>
<i>Total</i>	<u>322</u>	<u>17,585</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>592</u>	<u>565</u>

Caver Training

Income	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
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Expenditure

Recreational Caver Training	233	240
<i>Total</i>	<u>233</u>	<u>240</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(233)</u>	<u>(240)</u>

Publications & Information**Income**

Publication Sales	536	133
Advertising	160	160
<i>Total</i>	<u>696</u>	<u>293</u>

Expenditure

Secretarial	0	11
Travel	0	39
Handbook	938	1,109
Newsletter	412	1,005
Journal	3,750	5,527
<i>Total</i>	<u>5,100</u>	<u>7,691</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(4,404)</u>	<u>(7,398)</u>

Equipment & Techniques		
Income	<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>
		<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
Secretarial	0	99
Travel	269	488
Anchor programme	5,298	3,621
Rope-Test programme	345	524
	<i>Total</i>	<u>5,912</u>
		<u>4,732</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(5,912)</u>
		<u>(4,732)</u>
Youth Development		
Income	<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>
		<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
Youth Development	128	0
	<i>Total</i>	<u>128</u>
		<u>0</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(128)</u>
		<u>0</u>
Meetings & Conferences		
Income	<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>
		<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
Outdoor Show	0	942
Artificial Cave	306	4,034
Cliff Hanger	379	380
	<i>Total</i>	<u>685</u>
		<u>5,356</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(685)</u>
		<u>(5,356)</u>
Web Services		
Income		
Web Services	1,339	1,348
	<i>Total</i>	<u>1,339</u>
		<u>1,348</u>
Expenditure		
Web Services	1,793	1,985
	<i>Total</i>	<u>1,793</u>
		<u>1,985</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(454)</u>
		<u>(637)</u>

Regional Caving Council Expenditure			
Income	<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure			
CCC claims		2,165	845
CNCC claims		1,746	691
CSCC claims		1,692	754
DCA claims		2,935	1,383
DCUC claims		787	197
	<i>Total</i>	<u>9,325</u>	<u>3,870</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(9,325)</u>	<u>(3,870)</u>
British Caving Library			
Income	<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure			
Grant		10,000	10,000
	<i>Total</i>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(10,000)</u>	<u>(10,000)</u>
Expedition Programme			
Income	<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure			
Grants to Expeditions		5,000	5,000
	<i>Total</i>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(5,000)</u>	<u>(5,000)</u>
International			
Income	<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure			
Grants to Reps.		631	303
	<i>Total</i>	<u>631</u>	<u>303</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(631)</u>	<u>(303)</u>
<i>Total Income</i>		<u>126,661</u>	<u>117,819</u>
<i>Total Expenditure</i>		<u>121,409</u>	<u>110,414</u>
<i>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</i>		<u>5,252</u>	<u>7,405</u>
Tax	<i>Prior Year Adjustment</i>	86	0
	<i>Current Year</i>	725	552
		<u>811</u>	<u>552</u>
<i>Total Surplus / (Deficit) less Tax</i>		<u>4,441</u>	<u>6,853</u>

British Caving Association

Equipment and Techniques Committee

Association scheme for the placement of designated anchors.

1. Scope

This scheme shall cover the use of designated anchors for any purpose, including for ladder and line, SRT and other fixed aids. It does not cover, prohibit or endorse the use of any other type of anchors for the same purposes.

2. Selection of designated anchor systems

From time to time, the Equipment & Techniques (E&T) Committee shall make recommendations on the choice of designated anchor system to be placed for various purposes in UK caves and mines.

Regional Councils shall be free to use alternative anchors, but they must take responsibility for gathering the evidence required to demonstrate the safety of any system which they choose.

The results of any tests shall be reported to the E&T Committee.

3. Funding

BCA will re-imburse Regional Councils' expenses necessarily incurred in the placing of designated anchors in their region.

Applications for re-imbusement of expenses must be made via the E&T Committee.

In general, the E&T Committee will fund the direct costs of placing designated anchors, i.e. the purchase of designated anchors, resin, drills and similar equipment, travel, training and other directly related expenses.

From time to time, the E&T Committee may commit funds in support of testing programmes and other activities undertaken by Regional Councils and others on its behalf.

4. Location and use of designated anchors

Regional Councils shall establish a procedure to consider and approve the choice of locations for the placing of designated anchors within their regions.

5. Training of installers

Regional Councils shall ensure that all persons placing designated anchors on their behalf are appropriately trained and experienced to ensure that:

- designated anchors are placed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions;
- the choice of location of the designated anchor is appropriate for the caving techniques it is expected to support;
- the persons placing the designated anchor are able to ensure their own safety while placing the designated anchor;
- records of the placement are made in accordance with this scheme.

Regional Councils shall maintain a list of persons authorized to place designated anchors on their behalf within their region. Those persons shall be Individual Members of BCA. The list shall be reviewed annually with a view to deleting from the list persons who have insufficient recent training or experience in designated anchor placement or are no longer Members of BCA.

Regional Councils shall take responsibility for the training of persons who will be authorized to place designated anchors on their behalf. The delivery of training and assessment will be undertaken by individuals authorized by the E&T Committee.

Training shall be undertaken in an organized manner against a written syllabus which shall be supplied to the E&T Committee.

The E&T Committee shall regularly review the information at its disposal and inform Regional Councils of any identified need for retraining or changes in procedure.

6. Record keeping and reporting

Regional Councils shall establish a procedure for recording the details of designated anchor placements, including at least:

- The location of the designated anchor;
- Who placed it;
- When it was placed;
- The type of designated anchor; and
- Batch and/or serial numbers of the designated anchor and resin.

Records shall be kept by the Regional Council and a copy shall be given to the E&T Committee.

7. Inspection of designated anchors and reporting of defects

Cavers using anchors shall be responsible for checking each anchor prior to use on each and every occasion.

Designated anchors placed under this scheme shall not be subjected to regular periodic inspection.

Regional Councils must have in place a reporting mechanism which permits cavers to report unsatisfactory designated anchors. The mechanism must be publicized so that it is widely known about and easy to use.

Regional Councils shall investigate reports of unsatisfactory designated anchors within a reasonable time period and shall take action to decommission and/or replace any designated anchors which are found to be unsafe.

Regional Councils shall provide a report on each such investigation to the E&T Committee.

Version 1a

As agreed by E&T Committee, 14 April 2013

BCA's Disciplinary Procedure *(updates in yellow)*

In respect of employees of BCA, it should be noted that where the disciplinary matter relates to an employee's work or where the BCA may be brought into disrepute by the actions of the employee, then the matter will be handled in accordance with current employment legislation and their contract of employment rather than this process

5.6.1 Procedure for Award Holders

5.6.1.1 General Principles:

- No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter in question has been investigated.
- At every stage individuals will have the opportunity to state their case, either themselves or through a representative.
- There is always a right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty and this appeal will be held by a panel that is independent of the original decision makers.

5.6.1.2 Procedure

5.6.1.2.1 A Potential Disciplinary Matter

Once it has become clear that an Award Holder (currently LCMLA, CIC or Anchor Installer) may have acted against BCA's interests, one or more of BCA Executive will be informed. Executive will then consult with the appropriate Officer (currently Training or Equipment & Techniques) to ascertain whether or not the matter may be related to the Award they hold. If the Officer is unavailable within an appropriate timescale, then Executive should consult with another experienced member of the Committee for judgement.

If the matter IS deemed to relate to the Award held, then this Policy should be followed. If not, then the individual will be treated according to the non-Award Holder Policy.

BCA Executive will now appoint someone to carry out an initial investigation into the circumstances **before deciding how to proceed. If it is felt that there may be a case to answer, then an Investigatory Review Panel will normally follow.**

5.6.1.2.2 Investigatory Review Panel

This will usually be the appropriate Standing Committee, National Council or Executive depending on the nature of the matter. If the matter is sufficiently urgent, it will be dealt with by Executive following their normal Method of Working.

From the outset Executive will appoint a Chair of the Appeals Panel who must ensure they are not involved in any way in the Investigatory Review or Disciplinary Panel.

When the arrangements for the Investigatory Review Panel have been finalised, the member will be written to at their last known address advising them of the complaint made against them, the time, date and location of Review, and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. A period of 30 days shall usually be given between this and the Review, although in some cases, particularly those relating to safety, this may be reduced.

Following the Review, the member will be written to again, usually within 14 days of the Review, outlining the outcome and giving the opportunity for appeal.

Outcomes of an Investigatory Review Panel

Each case should be considered individually with available outcomes including:

- clearing of any misconduct, potentially also including an apology to the member;
- words of advice;
- a verbal warning;
- a written warning;
- escalation to a Disciplinary Panel.

5.6.1.2.3 Disciplinary Panel

Should either the initial investigation or the Investigatory Review Panel conclude that available evidence is sufficiently robust and serious in nature, then a Disciplinary Panel should be convened. This will follow the same procedures as the Investigatory Review Panel, but the potential outcomes are more far reaching.

5.6.1.2.4 Outcomes of a Disciplinary Panel

Each case should be considered individually with available outcomes including:

- clearing of any misconduct, potentially also including an apology to the member;
- words of advice;
- a verbal warning;
- a written warning;
- suspension of membership and/or certificates or awards for a fixed period;
- expulsion from BCA and/or removal of certificates or awards.

5.6.1.2.5 Notes

In the case of suspension of membership, this may also include the temporary removal of membership benefits, such as insurance.

When a decision involves removing or suspending an individual's leadership or instructing award, it is important to understand that this will probably have a serious impact on their professional well-being, quite likely including an immediate loss of income. This should be borne in mind as part of the decision-making process, but needs to be balanced against the need to maintain confidence in BCA's award schemes.

5.6.2 Procedure for non-Award-Holding Individuals, Group and Associate Members

5.6.2.1 General Principles:

- No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter in question has been investigated.
- At every stage individuals, groups or associate members will have the opportunity to state their case, either themselves or through a representative.
- There is always a right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty and this appeal will be held by a panel that is independent of the original decision makers.

5.6.2.2 Procedure

5.6.2.2.1 A Potential Disciplinary Matter

Once it has become clear that an individual or group may have acted against BCA's interests, the following process should generally be followed:

One or more of BCA Executive will be informed who will initially check to ensure they are not a BCA Award Holder, in which case they are treated according to the Award-Holder Policy. BCA Executive will then appoint someone to carry out an initial investigation into the circumstances before deciding how to proceed. If it is felt that there may be a case to answer, then an Investigatory Review Panel will normally follow.

5.6.2.2.2 Investigatory Review Panel

This will usually be the appropriate Standing Committee, National Council or Executive depending on the nature of the matter. If the matter is sufficiently urgent, it will be dealt with by Executive following their normal Method of Working.

From the outset Executive will appoint a Chair of the Appeals Panel who must ensure they are not involved in any way in the Investigatory Review or Disciplinary Panel.

When the arrangements for the Investigatory Review Panel have been finalised, the member will be written to at their last known address advising them of the complaint made against them, the time, date and location of Review, and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. A period of 30 days shall usually be given between this and the Review, although in some cases, particularly those relating to safety, this may be reduced.

Following the Review, the member will be written to again, usually within 14 days of the Review, outlining the outcome and giving the opportunity for appeal.

Outcomes of an Investigatory Review Panel

Each case should be considered individually with available outcomes including:

- clearing of any misconduct, potentially also including an apology to the member;
- words of advice;
- a verbal warning;
- a written warning;
- escalation to a Disciplinary Panel.

5.6.2.2.3 A Formal Disciplinary Matter

Should either the initial investigation or the Investigatory Review Panel conclude that available evidence is sufficiently robust and serious in nature, then a Disciplinary Panel should be convened. This will follow the same procedures as the Investigatory Review Panel, but the potential outcomes are more far reaching.

5.6.2.2.4 Outcomes of a Disciplinary Panel

Each case should be considered individually with available outcomes including:

- clearing of any misconduct, potentially also including an apology to the member;
- words of advice;
- a verbal warning;
- a written warning;
- suspension of membership for an appropriate period;
- expulsion from BCA.

5.6.3 The Appeals Process

An appeal will be dealt with by an Appeals Panel. This will be convened by the Chair of the Appeals Panel and will normally consist of people chosen by the Chair from nominations made by the Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies. None shall have been involved in the original Disciplinary Panel.

The Chair will seek to arrange a mutually convenient date and location for the Appeal, and then write to the individual, group or associate member formally advising them of the appeal and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. Until the Appeal the original disciplinary action will stand.

Following the appeal, the individual, group or associate will be written to again outlining the outcome of the process. This will usually be within 14 days of the hearing.

5.6.4 Notes

1. In the case of suspension of membership, this may also include the temporary removal of membership benefits, such as insurance.
2. In the case of a club being suspended or expelled, any Club Individual Members from that club will be written to and offered either: a pro-rata refund; the option of transferring their membership to a DIM (on payment of the appropriate fee); or the chance to switch their main club affiliation to another member club they are a member of. In the event of a successful appeal BCA will subsequently refund any additional membership fees paid by an individual as a result of the above.

British Caving Association (BCA)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

2013

Updated and Reviewed by Council

This Child Protection Policy document, and its accompanying Guidance Notes, are issued strictly for the guidance of caving and mining clubs and societies and individual members that constitute the main membership of the Association. Members and organisations controlled by Local Authorities, **the Armed Services** and other external organisations are expected to have their own policies, guidance and working rules/arrangements that are entirely their own responsibility for developing, administering and updating within the same legal framework as the Association. **These will normally be assumed to take precedence.**

1.00 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 1.01 BCA recognises the requirements of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (PoCA) and subsequent legislation affecting children, young persons **and vulnerable adults**.
- 1.02 PoCA includes “children”, that is under 16’s, and “young persons”, that is 16 to 18s as well (further referred to here with equal meaning as “young persons” or “children”).
- 1.03 PoCA takes in sexual, emotional and physical abuse and also “neglect” (which includes all aspects of failure to ensure the safety of young persons **and vulnerable adults**).

2.00 POLICY STATEMENTS

- 2.01 BCA recognises the importance of the welfare of young persons **and vulnerable adults** and their right to protection from abuse, as set out in section 1.00 of this document.
- 2.02 BCA recognises its duty of care to young persons and vulnerable adults for the actions of its trustees, officers and agents.
- 2.03 BCA will take all allegations of child abuse seriously and will respond to such allegations quickly.
- 2.04 BCA considers that in any caving or mine exploration activity safety of the participants and conservation of the cave are of paramount concern at all times.
- 2.05 BCA encourages the participation of young persons in caving and mine exploration, provided that:-
 - a. The introduction of caving to these persons is carried out by suitably experienced adults; and
 - b. it is done in a progressive manner attuned to the physical and mental capacities of the participants; and
 - c. the conservation requirements of this unique environment are fully stressed as an integral part of educational development of the individual.

3.00 BCA: ITS TRUSTEES, OFFICERS AND AGENTS

- 3.01 If BCA receives an allegation of child abuse against one of its trustees, officers or agents, then it will treat it as a potential criminal activity and report it to the police.
- 3.02 In addition, one or more members of the Executive (Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer) will immediately be informed and will then take prompt action, as an Executive Body, to consider such matters as suspension of awards/benefits and all necessary further actions.

4.00 BCA; RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBERS

- 4.01 BCA recommends that in any activity involving children **and/or vulnerable adults**, whether training or caving or preparing for caving, there should be at least two adults present at all times.
- 4.02 BCA recommends that where **regular** caving and/or caver training activities involving children **and/or vulnerable adults**, are planned, then guidelines such as those set out in *Child Protection in Sport Unit, Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport* should be followed for the selection, vetting and recruitment of the participating adults.
- 4.03 All adults involved in **regular** activities with children **and/or vulnerable adults**, should be made aware of best practice in responding to alleged or possible abuse as set out in the above publication (see 4.02 above).