



Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting (DRAFT)

Held at 10:30am, Sunday 9th June 2019
Horton in Ribblesdale Village Hall, BD24 0HA

Chair: Les Williams

Acting Secretary: Robin Weare

Acting Treasurer: Howard Jones

Recorder: Matt Ewles

PRESENT

Shown in order written on the attendance sheet:

Name	Initials	Individual member voting?	Group voting (specify group)
Kay Easton	KE	Yes	
Edward Easton	EE	Yes	
Wayne Sheldon	WS	Yes	
Gary Douthwaite	GD	Yes	York Caving Club
Adrian Turner	AT	Yes	
Jenny Potts	JP	Yes	Derbyshire Caving Association
Howard Jones	HJ	Yes	
Wendy Williams	WW	Yes	
Robin Weare	RW	Yes	Hades Caving Club
Les Williams	LW	Yes	
Matt Ewles	ME	Yes	
Tony Radmall	TR	Yes	West Sussex Cave Club
Andy Eavis	AE	Yes	
Laura Bennett	LB	Yes	
Rachel Findlay	RF	Yes	
Alistair Rollinson	ARO	Yes	
Mark Rushton	MR	Yes	
Mike Higgins	MHI	Yes	
Joseph Smith	JS	Yes	Nottingham University Caving Club
Will Burn	WB	Yes	Speleological Union of Ireland
Josh Young	JY	Yes	Sheffield University Speleological Society
Joseph Twigg	JT	Yes	
Frank Tully	FT	Yes	Wessex Cave Club
Alan Butcher	AB		Council of Southern Caving Clubs
Rostam Namaghi	RN	Yes	
Zander Lee	ZL	Yes	Lancaster University Speleological Society
Robert Scott	RS	Yes	Craven Pothole Club
Paul McWhinney	PM	Yes	
Jean Brooksbank	JB	Yes	UWFRA Outdoor Club
Idris Williams	IW	Yes	Shropshire Scouts Caving Team
Christopher Williams	CW	Yes	
David Cooke	DC	Yes	Cheddar Caving Club
Tegwen Morris	TM	Yes	
Jerry Gibbs	JGI	Yes	
Pete O'Neill	PON	Yes	
Harvey Lomas	HL	Yes	
Louise McMullon	LM	Yes	
Alastair Gott	AG	Yes	Technical Speleological Group
Mick Lanceton	ML	Yes	

Mark Sims	MS	Yes	Buttered Badgers Pothole Club
Cat Moody	CM	Yes	Bradford Pothole Club
Ged Campion	GC	Yes	Yorkshire Ramblers Club
Stuart Whitmey	SWH	Yes	Earby Pothole Club
Hellie Adams	HA	Yes	University of Bristol Speleological Society
Martin Hoff	MHF	Yes	
Phil Rowsell	PR	Yes	
Jane Guilbert	JGU	Yes	
Emma Key	EK	Yes	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club
Livvy Golby-Kirk	LGK	Yes	Manchester University Speleology Club
Jean-Luc Heath	JLH	Yes	York University Cave and Pothole Club
David Botcherby	DB	Yes	Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs
Sam Richards	SR	Yes	Bristol Exploration Club
Adam Cowdrey	AD	Yes	Aberystwyth Caving Club
Simon Williams	SWI	Yes	Swansea Speleological Society
Dewi Lloyd	DL	Yes	North Wales Caving Club
Katrina Hawkins	KH	Yes	Northern Pennine Club
Juliet Parker-Smith	JPS	Yes	
Bill Nix	BN	Yes	Rubber Duck Caving Club
Allan Richardson	ARI	Yes	Cambrian Caving Council
Jo White	JWH	Yes	
Andrew McLeod	AM	Yes	Exeter University Speleology Society
Stephan Natynczuk	SN	Yes	Association of Caving Instructors
Andrew Hinde	AH	Yes	Gritstone Club
Jon Beavan	JB	Yes	
Jane Allen	JA	Yes	
Alex Ohawa	AO	Yes	
Tim Allen	TA	Yes	Council of Northern Caving Clubs
Sam Allshorn	SA	Yes	
Carmen Smith	CS	Yes	
Ian Dawson	ID	Yes	North York Moors Caving Club
David Williams	DW	Yes	
Jonathan Wickes	JWI	Yes	
John Holloway	JHO	Yes	
Rio McElvenny	RM	Yes	

Total: 73 voting individual members (CIM/DIM)

36 voting groups including **4 of 5 regional councils** and **2 of 8 constituent bodies**.

Notes on voting: For many votes, there was a very clear (unmistakable) majority one way or another. In these circumstances, where the result was unmistakable, the number of votes for the majority were not counted to expedite the meeting and this is simply recorded as 'large majority'. Where any uncertainty about a majority existed, the votes for all positions (against, abstain, in favour) were counted.

1. Chair's Welcome

LW opened the meeting at 10:34am, provided housekeeping information on the venue, and opened with a short silence to reflect on caving companions lost over the past few weeks.

LW declared the meeting quorate in accordance with the requirements of the constitution.

2. Apologies

The following apologies were noted either in advance or on the day:

Jenny Smith, Ric Halliwell, Pat Halliwell, Chris Boardman, Steve Holding, Louise Baddeley, Gethin Thomas, David Rose, John Hine, George Plant, Nick Williams, Emma Porter, Nigel Atkins, John Cordingley, Richard Vooght, David Jean, David Gibson, Bob Mehew

3. Applications for Group Membership

Two applicants; UK Mine Exploration and Carbis Bay Crew (see Membership Administrator's report). RW confirmed that all documentation for these applications was in place. There were no objections, so these two new member clubs were elected.

4. Minutes of 2018 Annual General Meeting

RW confirmed he had received emails suggesting two changes to the minutes and invited those requesting the changes to speak:

- JA clarified, regarding page 34 of the 2018 minutes, P&I Officer, that her offer to stand was preceded by some explanation of her thoughts on the role, which was not reflected in the minutes. JA had expressed her belief that the BCA should better promote itself, both to the caving community so they know what BCA does, but also to a wider audience to show how great caving is, thus the P&I involved a PR/marketing role. Given her background in these matters, JA had expressed that she would like to see the role expanded to include PR and marketing. The minutes will be updated to reflect this statement. HA confirmed that JA had made such a statement; there were no objections to this amendment.
- TA said that his full motion about the Vision and Reform group was omitted from the minutes. RW confirmed that the full proposal was recorded, however TA clarified that he meant the proposal that was actually voted upon after the revision at the meeting (which changed the proposal from 'establish a group' to 'instruct Council to establish a group'. RW felt that this change had been reflected in the minutes, however, for clarity the full final proposal below will be added to the 2018 AGM minutes (no objections raised):

"The AGM instructs council to establish a 'working group' to determine a new mission and vision for the organisation. To outline a strategy to achieve this vision and make recommendations for any changes to the organisations structure and constitution. The group should be made up of a majority of younger cavers from the constituent bodies, regions and membership under an established convener agreed by council. The group should aim to be established within six months (by the January council meeting) and should report on recommendations to the 2020 AGM."

- DC clarified that on page 8 of the 2018 AGM minutes there is a typo; '75% of DIMs' should read '25% of DIMs'. WW confirmed this revised figure to be the correct one. No objections to implementing this change.
- LW called for a vote to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record subject to these amendments/corrections. There was a large majority in favour, so the minutes were accepted subject to these changes.

Note; just after this 2019 AGM, AE confirmed that his Media Liaison Officer report to the 2018 AGM was never published in error; this will be added as a retrospective addition to the minutes document prior to them being finalised, to ensure this report is captured.

Action: ME update 2018 AGM minutes with corrections and publish as final.

Officer's Annual Reports

5. Chair (Les Williams)

No questions; report accepted.

6a. Acting Secretary (Robin Weare)

RW clarified a few points and additions to his report:

- Regarding the Equality and Diversity policy, RW commented that George Plant had informed him that the wording in the equality policy was borrowed and adapted with permission, from North Yorkshire Youth, the charity which employs him, and he wished to pass on his thanks to them for allowing this.
- Regarding the matter of under 16/18s into caves managed by Charterhouse Caving Company; RW acknowledged that he was asked in December to provide a copy of the questions in the final draft of the brief sent to the solicitor. He felt he had replied to that email in a way which clearly indicated that he had misunderstood it. There was subsequent communication with WB and RN, but the request was not mentioned by either of them and at no point was RW reminded. RW said he feels annoyed that six months later, a report appears for the AGM, which he felt to be a poor attempt to manufacture a grievance but couldn't understand why.
- RW said that the questions passed to the Solicitor had been exactly the same as those in the draft seen by RN and WB and this had been noted by DCA Chairman WS who had been shown them prior to the meeting.
- RW added that it had been agreed at a meeting between LW, RW and WB that WB would produce a first draft of a summary of the advice and RW had referred to this in an email to RN, LW and WB on 21st January 2019. No reply to this email was received and nothing had been produced by WB. RW said he is very unhappy that WB and RN are apparently questioning his integrity on this matter.
- AB expressed concern that the BCA constitution (section 11.1) had been violated through the actions of the BCA on the Charterhouse issue. He cited this section of the constitution:

BCA Constitution section 11.1: *“The Association shall not interfere in the affairs of a Member unless specifically requested to do so by that Member. The Association shall not mediate between Members unless requested by them in writing to do so.”*

- RN confirmed that the BCA had been asked to intervene on the basis that members are being discriminated against based on their age. RN felt that if the age limit was set in law then this would be fair enough, but it isn't and instead it is being presented as being a liability issue for which there is no justification.
- AB clarified that the reason for the historic age limit dated back to a historic agreement with Bristol Waterworks, in which a contract could not be signed by anyone under 16/18, therefore this is simply a matter of the detail of the access agreement and not a matter of discrimination.
- AH suggested there isn't anything here for the AGM to act upon so we should move on. The Secretary report was accepted.

6b. Insurance Manager (Howard Jones)

Several matters raised in relation to the Insurance Manager's report:

- HJ highlighted that the expedition insurance policy is now live and available.
- HJ raised the matter of instructor insurance, highlighting that although it is not a BCA issue, he has been working to help find a solution, and has an upcoming meeting to discuss a possible resolution; this is a challenging situation due to the very small market.

Action: HJ to report back on any progress on this matter to the October Council Meeting.

- Regarding personal accident insurance; HJ confirmed that this was discussed at the April Council meeting, and since then he has had lots of positive feedback. He will present a budget to the October Council meeting both with and without personal accident insurance included, and we can see whether this is something we wish to proceed with (it would be our second biggest cost behind the public liability insurance). TA commented that Howdens is a highly profit-making company and expressed concern that the current premium will be unsustainable as it may be constantly escalating. HJ said that Howdens are the broker, not the underwriter, but acknowledged that all insurance companies are profit-making and that the premium may rise in the future, or they may walk away, for example, if there are too many claims in comparison to the premiums. The same is true of the public liability insurance. This is a risk we would have to take. HJ felt TA was right to bring this point of view to the attention of the meeting.

Action: HJ to table personal accident insurance for discussion at the October Council Meeting.

- SA asked whether an indicative vote could be taken here at the AGM to assess the appetite for the personal accident insurance; this was done for all individuals present; although the exact numbers were not counted it was estimated that >80% were in favour.

- PR asked for clarification that we can just drop out of this policy if it becomes too expensive; LW confirmed that yes, we can.
- HJ raised the matter of Minera Quarry, North Wales, where access has been restricted for some time due to the Wildlife Trust wanting £10m in public liability insurance (currently BCA offers £5m). It would cost an additional £700/year to specifically insure just this site up to a value of £10m, or approximately £7000/year to extend the BCA liability policy to £10m nationally. HJ declared a conflict of interests, as he lives just down the road from Minera Quarry, so if access was regained, he would visit the caves. HJ felt more organisations are starting to make noises towards wanting £10m in public liability cover. LW felt this was a matter to be brought to Council and we should move on. Report accepted.

Action: HJ/ME to table liability insurance value for discussion at the October Council Meeting.

6c. Safeguarding Officer (Chris Boardman)

RW presented the report in Chris' absence and emphasised that he (Chris) is extremely approachable if anyone has any questions regarding safeguarding. Report accepted.

7. Acting Treasurer (Howard Jones)

HJ summarised the financial statements (as reported), emphasising that the accounts were mostly prepared by RW, and asked for any questions. SA asked if we could spend some of this money, and HJ said that he was trying. Report and accounts accepted.

8a. Conservation and Access report (Andrew Hinde)

AH confirmed he had nothing to add to his report and there were no questions; report accepted.

8b. CRoW (David Rose)

David Rose not present; there were no questions; report accepted.

9a. Equipment and Techniques (Mark Sims)

MS confirmed he had nothing to add to his report and there were no questions; report accepted.

9b. Rope Testing (Bob Mehew)

Bob Mehew not present. MS confirmed that the warning message mentioned in Bob's report has now been published on the BCA website. Report accepted.

10. Training (Nigel Atkins)

Nigel Atkins not present; there were no questions; report accepted.

11. Youth and Development (Rostam Namaghi)

The Charterhouse Caving Company matter was discussed in detail:

- RN felt that WB has taken a lot of abuse over the Charterhouse Caving Company issue, although he understands the sensitivity of this. What should we tell our members about this issue? LW confirmed that there is a formal complaints procedure, and asked RN to confirm exactly what he was wanting to achieve. RN said that he wants clarification of the BCA position; a complaint has been made, and there is no legal reason why under 16/18's cannot gain access to Charterhouse caves, so what does the BCA tell people who complain

that this is discrimination?

- WB said that people from Charterhouse Caving Company were personally attacking him and trying to undermine him. He asked why a letter sent to RW from Peter Burgess and Tony Brocklebank complaining about him, was distributed to BCA Officers. RW confirmed that it was the request of the authors to distribute this.
- AB said that it was disappointing that the Charterhouse Caving Company were not here to present their side of the story.
- DB asked whether there was any more the BCA Council could do beyond discussing a formal complaint. RN asked whether Youth and Development could produce a summary of the BCA's legal advice to support their case; LW said he thought that this had already been agreed at the April Council meeting.
- RW said that during the lunch break at the January Council meeting he and LW met WB, who agreed to write the summary of the legal advice, however WB denied this.
- TA said that WB has been the subject of several complaints and felt that changes in the BCA will bring greater support for the Youth and Development, emphasising the importance of such support; he felt the current situation reflects badly on the BCA.
- SA expressed that his membership money had gone into paying for this legal advice and so he should have a right to see it. LW said that the BCA Council (at the April Council meeting) accepted a recommendation from a barrister that this advice should not be released as it is sensitive and could compromise some access situations.
- WB asked whether the Access and Conservation Officer could see the legal advice? LW said it was up to BCA Council to decide what happens to this advice. SA asked whether this AGM could instruct Council on this; LW confirmed yes, but Council doesn't have to comply (although it can be held to account if it doesn't comply).
- TA compared the situation to the QC opinion on CRoW, which had been widely circulated. Despite this, some people chose not to accept this opinion. TA felt that people will always form their own interpretation of such advice/opinion documents, and will be inclined to cherry-pick the bits that support their own views.
- LW stressed that the legal advice would have serious ramifications if released. AR said that the law in Wales is slightly different and asked whether the legal advice could also impact on the situation in Wales; LW said yes, it could.
- A vote on whether to accept the Youth and Development report was taken; there were 5 abstentions, 1 vote against, remainder (estimated >60) in favour. Report accepted.

12a. Publications and Information (Les Williams)

No questions raised and nothing to add; report accepted.

12b. Webmaster (David Cooke)

Several points raised relating to the webmaster report:

- JA disputed the wording in the report, saying she did not commission a replacement website; she arranged an example of what the website could look like. JA also clarified that she was not embarrassed by her actions as suggested in the report; that this was putting words into her mouth. DC clarified that his understanding of the January Council meeting was an intention to commission a new website, and now he felt that GD is enacting this. DC expressed frustration that JA had not spoken to him about this beforehand. GD confirmed that the demo website was only intended to be an example.
- DC asked GD whether, if he becomes webmaster, he would be replacing the current website. GD clarified that yes, in time the current website would be replaced with something more modern. However, this will not happen immediately, and a new beta-version of the website would be developed for comment while the existing website remains in place.
- A vote was taken to accept the webmaster report subject to the understanding that the use of 'embarrassed' is on record as being redacted. Votes to accept the report; 17, reject; 16, abstentions; 23, therefore the webmaster report is accepted.

12c. Web Services (David Cooke)

No questions and nothing to add; report accepted.

12d. News Editor (David Rose)

David Rose not present at meeting, no questions.

Other Annual Reports

13. Membership Administrator (Wendy Williams)

No questions; report accepted.

14. Qualifications Management Committee (QMC) (Juliet Parker-Smith)

JPS said that there had been a lot of confusion over the role of the Training Committee and the QMC and expressed thanks to everyone who had been involved to help clarify this. No questions, report accepted.

15. Cave Registry (David Cooke)

No questions; report accepted.

16. IT Working Group (David Cooke)

No questions; report accepted.

17. Vision and Constitution Working Group (Hellie Adams)

No questions; report accepted.

18a. International Representative (Andy Eavis)

No questions; report accepted.

18b. FSE Representative (Ged Campion)

GC emphasised his disappointment that the next EuroSpeleo forum looks likely to clash with Hidden Earth. No questions; report accepted.

19. Media Liaison (Andy Eavis)

No questions; report accepted.

20. British Caving Library (Jenny Potts)

No questions; report accepted.

21a. Constituent Bodies (Various)

RW read out a report from the British Cave Rescue Council (received by email but too late for inclusion in the printed reports document):

On behalf of BCRC, I would like to express our sincere thanks at the tremendous support provided by BCA officers and cavers during and after the Thailand cave rescue.

We are immensely grateful for the IT assistance from Dave Cooke when we encountered the server problems, and to Andy Eavis and the team he quickly put together to alleviate some of the media pressure, and to everyone who supported us. I was jointly running the UK control and operations with Bill Whitehouse for the duration of the rescue, and this was difficult and challenging enough without the constant media frenzy we faced (even the media were describing the attention as unprecedented!), and BCA's support was invaluable. With the first anniversary fast approaching, I have already noticed an increase in media enquiries, so we could have a busy few weeks ahead.

It is a privilege to be part of the caving and cave rescue family, and it was truly humbling to witness first hand the support we received, and just how many people went out of their way to provide unconditional help, and in so many different ways. Thank you to everyone.

Emma Porter, BCRC Secretary

Additionally, the Council of Southern Caving Clubs representative (AB) read out a report:

"The CSCC has nothing to report but wishes to comment that the CSCC view of the tone of a number of items on the agenda and the supporting papers seem to be moving the Association towards the status of an organisation which wants to exercise control and governance over it's members and caving in general, which the CSCC sees as a retrograde step."

The Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (CHECC) representative (DB) read out a report:

"It's been another good year for CHECC with a well attended forum at Hope Valley College, Derbyshire. We're happy to welcome Swansea and Birmingham as BCA member clubs and look forward to seeing them caving with other clubs and at CHECC events. We're also very happy to see the BCA gifting over £3000 worth of kit to new clubs Lancaster and Swansea. It's a huge investment in the future of caving which the clubs involved won't soon forget, and has been criminally under-publicised as an example of

the BCA doing good for its members. The main CHECC Forum this year is the 22nd-24th November at Plas-y-Dolygaer Outdoor Centre, near Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales and as always, all are welcome, especially if you have a talk you think students would enjoy, or would like to give (or receive!) some training."

The Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC) representative (TA) welcomed everyone to the Yorkshire Dales. He highlighted the contribution that the BCA has made to the 'mend our mountains' campaign, the first project of which has just been completed. We can feel good about our contribution to this.

All reports accepted with no questions.

21b. Radon Working Group (Gethin Thomas)

RW clarified that this working group didn't have a specific slot on the agenda as it has only recently been set up. The report was accepted, no questions.

Election of Officers and Representatives

22. Election of Officers and National Council Members

- RN opened by saying that he felt we still needed to elect people even for positions which are uncontested, arguing that the constitution says this is a requirement. Section 6.1 of the constitution was cited;

"The Association shall have the following officers: a Council Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer together with Chairmen of the Standing Committees (Section 7), who shall be elected from the membership of the Association at an Annual General Meeting, by a show of hands of those present who are eligible to vote. Here the two-house voting system outlined in sub section 8.9 will not apply. Each officer shall serve for a term of three years from the AGM. One third of Officers' posts in turn shall be eligible for election or re-election each year and those elected shall serve for a term of three years from the AGM."

- After a brief discussion in which it was accepted that there is some uncertainty about what procedure was correct, the Chair agreed to proceed with elections for all positions including uncontested roles. No objections were raised to doing this.

All five officer positions (22.1-22.5) were elected with unanimous votes in favour:

22.1. Honorary President (three-year term, ending 2022) – Mick Day

22.2. Secretary (three-year term, ending 2022) – Matt Ewles

22.3. Treasurer (the remainder of a three-year term ending 2020) – Howard Jones

22.4. Publications and Information Officer (the remainder of a three-year term ending 2020) – Jane Allen

22.5. Conservation and Access (three-year term, ending 2022) – Louise Baddeley

22.6, Individual Member Representatives

This opened with considerable discussion regarding the disputed application of WB:

- RN asked whether WB could run for a position, as he did send his application by email and within the deadline, but had not been allowed to run by the Secretary (RW). RW read out WB's

application email and his reply, which stated that unless a paper form could be produced before the deadline, WB would not be able to be accepted and would have to run from the floor. RW emphasised that this was said before other applicants came forward and thus it appeared at the time that there would be a vacant position, which in the end, there was not (as sufficient applicants for all the positions came forward ahead of the deadline with the correct documentation). Therefore, WB was not actually able to run from the floor.

- AG suggested that as WB had been told he could be elected from the floor at the meeting, this is what we should now do. AG suggested that there had been a misunderstanding here from WB which had resulted in this situation arising.
- RW clarified that the notification of the meeting (issued in January) stated the information which was necessary to accompany an application (RW listed this, including name and BCA number of applicant and seconder). WB had provided none of this in his application.
- DB asked whether the AGM could just vote on whether WB should be allowed to run. TA supported this, suggesting that the AGM is the final arbitrator of the constitution.
- RW emphasised that he had no problem with WB standing, but was only seeking to get the necessary information ahead of the meeting deadline. He highlighted that we have applications for each of the three roles, and all three applicants provided the requested information within the deadline, despite two of these being from people who have not served on BCA Council before. WB however did not provide the requested information.
- WB argued that he did not follow up with the requested information by email because the Secretary (RW) had told him he wouldn't be able to stand because he was in the US, and thus wouldn't be able to get a paper application form delivered before the deadline.
- JP said that whatever we decide at this meeting, the Manual of Operations needs to be updated ahead of the next AGM to more specifically clarify the requirements for running for a post, to avoid a repeat of this in future years.

Action: ME to schedule a review of Manual of Operations at October Council meeting.

- SA felt that as WB was trying to restand for a position he was already in, it was absurd that the requested information was needed.
- DB proposed that ***"This AGM allows WB to stand for the position of Individual Member Representative"***. This was seconded by JLH. There was further discussion rather than this proposal being voted on immediately.
- LW said that there are two ways forward to deal with this if DB's proposal were accepted; we either hold an election for the three posts between the four applicants or create an additional Individual Member position. AR raised concern that this could lead to anarchy, and if proceeding by this route we would have to clarify that this is a one-off for this AGM to resolve a unique situation and does not set future precedent.

- RW felt that any individual who felt disenfranchised by this action could potentially take the BCA to court.
- LW suggested that as this situation (i.e. WB not being put forward for election) is due to a misunderstanding, we should avoid disenfranchising the three applicants on the ballot by creating a fourth vacancy for which WB could stand. This was supported by TR.

At this point in the meeting, a brief recess was taken while the minute-taker (ME) worked with the Chair (LW) to formulate a suggested proposal to capture the points in the above discussion. The following proposal was suggested after the recess:

“This AGM acknowledges that there has been a misunderstanding regarding the appointment of Will Burn for the position of Individual member Representative. This AGM proposes to resolve this issue by the creating of one additional Individual Member Representative position as a one-off additional position, to serve for the duration of a two-year term. This does not establish any future precedent.”

- DB withdrew his original proposal and instead proposed this new wording. It was seconded by AR and received 3 votes against, 6 abstentions and a large majority of votes in favour. Thus, the proposal was accepted and an additional Individual Member Representative position will exist on BCA Council for WB until 2021 only (thus five positions in total).
- The meeting proceeded to election of the Individual Member Representatives. RW confirmed that the three original applicants had decided between themselves who would go for the one-year post (the remainder of a two year post left open by the departure of Louise Baddeley to the Conservation and Access position) and who would take the two two-year posts.
- A decision was taken to continue to vote on each post individually.

Nomination 1:

Tony Brocklebank, standing for the one-year term (not present at AGM)

14 votes against, 41 abstentions, 13 votes in favour. **Nomination unsuccessful.**

This position will remain vacant.

- RW expressed concern that the agenda states that these people were already elected, so this goes contrary to this (*retrospective note; the agenda has since been checked and this was only said for the five Officer positions, and not for the Individual or Club Member Representatives, therefore there is no conflict of information*).

Nomination 2:

David Cooke, standing for a two-year term

DC gave a brief introduction to himself. TA noted that DC has applied for both the Individual and Club Member Representative positions and asked why both. DC clarified he would like a vote on BCA council and will withdraw from whichever he doesn't get. SA asked whether DC represents Individuals or Clubs; DC confirmed that he will represent whichever he is elected to represent. CS asked whether DC saw any conflicts of interests on the Charterhouse Caving Company matter; DC confirmed no conflicts.

33 votes against, 12 abstentions, 20 votes in favour. **Nomination unsuccessful.**

This position will remain vacant.

Nomination 3:

Phil Rowsell, standing for a two-year term.

PR gave a brief introduction to himself. He clarified that his sole reason for standing was for change; to get rid of all the fighting and build the BCA into something that everyone will support.

0 votes against, 1 abstention, large majority in favour. **Nomination successful**

Nomination 4:

Will Burn, standing for an additional two-year term created specifically at this AGM.

PR gave a brief introduction to himself, saying that he has worked closely with RN in Youth and Development, CHECC and the new university clubs, and is keen to represent individual cavers.

0 votes against, 16 abstentions, large majority in favour. **Nomination successful**

Phil Rowsell and Will Burn are appointed Individual Member Representatives to serve for two years until 2021. WB's position is a fifth temporary position only. They join Andrew McLeod (already in post, ending 2020). Two positions (one ending 2020 and one ending 2021) remain vacant

22.7. Club/Group Member Representatives

The meeting proceeded to election of the Club/Group Member Representatives, for which two two-year positions were available. DC withdrew his application, stating that he did not wish to stand against newcomers to Council such as GD and HA.

Nomination 1:

Helen (Hellie) Adams (two-year term)

0 votes against, 3 abstentions, large majority in favour. **Nomination successful**

Nomination 2:

Gary Douthwaite (two-year term)

0 votes against, 2 abstentions, large majority in favour. **Nomination successful**

Hellie Adams and Gary Douthwaite are appointed Group Member Representatives to serve for two years until 2021. They join Idris Williams and John Hine (already in post, ending 2020).

Action: ME/GD to update BCA website with new Officers/Representatives

Other Matters

23. Council's Proposals

LW asked if everyone was happy to vote to accept all of the Council proposals together; general agreement. TA asked whether these have all been through proper process to vet them and make sure they are OK? RW said yes, they have all been very carefully put together and reviewed by the necessary bodies and experts. BCA Council have approved them.

Voting on all six BCA Council proposals, all of which relate to adoption of policies/procedures, as set out in the agenda:

Acceptance of Council-proposed policies:

House of individuals: 0 against, 1 abstention, large majority in favour

House of groups: 0 against, 2 abstentions, large majority in favour

Result: All proposals passed.

Action: ME/GD to update BCA website with policies

24. Proposals for the adoption of Standing Committee terms of reference

LW introduced this as a housekeeping exercise. RN asked whether we should omit the P&I terms of reference given potential changes later in this AGM; it was decided not to as there was no certainty the changes later would be adopted.

Acceptance of all Standing Committee terms of reference:

House of individuals: 1 against, 3 abstention, large majority in favour

House of groups: 0 against, 2 abstentions, large majority in favour

Result: All terms of reference accepted.

Action: ME/GD to update Manual of Operations with these terms of reference.

25. Proposals from members not affecting the constitution

25.1. New to Caving leaflet proposal

- TR asked why this proposal was here when the leaflet had already been agreed by BCA Council. ME explained that this proposal was submitted ahead of the last Council meeting so before the leaflet was approved. ME said he chose to leave the proposal in place as a way of showing the magnitude of membership support for this initiative.
- DC asked a question about the 'third avenue' into caving detailed on the leaflet (i.e. groups of friends getting together outside of clubs) and whether this is something the BCA should be suggesting. There was an inconclusive brief discussion before SA suggested that we move onto a vote given that this leaflet has already been agreed by Council.

Acceptance of New to Caving leaflet:

House of individuals: 0 against, 3 abstention, remainder votes for (passed)

House of groups: 0 against, 5 abstentions, many votes for (passed)

Result: Leaflet endorsed for publication.

Action: JA to progress leaflet to production and distribution.

25.2. BCA Logo

- LW questioned the wording of the proposal; ME clarified that the wording was intended to ensure that if anyone else puts forward a suggestion that it would also be able to be considered (nobody did). Hence, LW confirmed that there are essentially two options on the table; keep the new logo or adopt the new one.

- HA suggested that we postpone this for a year and urged ME to withdraw the proposal. ME declined, suggesting that if people support HA's suggestion, they can simply vote against the new logo meaning the old one will stay in place and the status quo maintained, which is essentially the same as a postponement.
- JP emphasised that there are lots of organisations/committees producing a lot of paperwork at the moment and a decision on the logo is needed now to avoid a lot of material being produced with a logo that may get changed in the immediate future. TA agreed, saying that we have just voted to adopt the New to Caving leaflet, and we can't produce this with the old logo only for that to potentially change soon.
- AM suggested that we could just postpone the decision for a few months to the October Council meeting to provide the opportunity for more people to submit designs. HA suggested that we should hold a competition to identify additional designs. ME feels a decision to change the logo should really come from a General Meeting and didn't want to wait another year, although there was some disagreement and feeling that this could be decided by BCA Council.
- KH reminded everyone that this is a logo for a national organisation; not something we want to be changing regularly.
- ID suggested that we should vote now; and if a change in logo is rejected, a competition to find an alternative design could be the fallback option as per HA/AM's suggestions. LW agreed and moved the discussion onto a vote to show support for the two logo options:

Existing logo (abseiling caver with stal motif beneath)

House of individuals: 10 votes in favour

House of groups: 8 votes in favour

New logo (silhouette caver on Dollytubs ledge):

House of individuals: Large majority

House of groups: Large majority

Abstentions from voting: 4 individuals, 3 groups.

Result: The suggested new BCA logo (silhouette caver on Dollytubs ledge) is accepted.

HJ asked where those needing the logo could get it? GD clarified that he is going to put together a 'press pack' which will be emailed out and/or placed on the website over the coming week.

Action: GD to compile 'press pack' for new logo and distribute as quickly as possible and update on website. All who use BCA logo: Commence process of updating BCA logo on documents.

25.3. Appointment of Gary Douthwaite as Webmaster

- ME provided an introduction for this proposal. He emphasised that he understood the webmaster is usually appointed by the Council at P&I recommendation at the Council meeting after the AGM, however, in this case we have two people each capable and willing to perform the webmaster role, who have differing views and visions regarding how the website should

work. ME felt that as this is such a significant issue with large consequences, it would be better put to an AGM this year to allow members to have a say on which vision they share.

- RW felt that the Manual of Operations would have to be changed by an AGM for this to happen, and that this proposal cannot be passed by this AGM in its current form. RN disagreed.
- ME said that he would be happy for the proposal wording to be amended to the AGM instructing Council to appoint GD as webmaster under the same terms of his proposal. This would avoid the deviation from the Manual of Operations cited by RW.
- AR felt that as the AGM was being asked to vote between two IT professionals, they could really do with an idea of what they are voting for and what each would do differently.
- RW felt the current BCA website is very easy to use and asked whether GD's website would achieve the same thing. GD confirmed yes. He would create a beta-version to run alongside the existing website to allow people to play with it and provide feedback and get familiar. RW said he was concerned about all the information stored in the background of the current website (e.g. the audit trail), and will this still exist? GD said perhaps, but as he is not adequately clear of the current system it's hard to say for sure; this is part of the reason for the beta system to run alongside the old system. He isn't going to scrap the existing website immediately.
- CW asked how it was possible to choose between two possible webmasters under these circumstances.
- DC said that he had no problem with someone else taking on the webmaster role; he is just trying to protect BCA's interests and ensuring that any new website retains the functionality of the current site and the editability by users. GD confirmed that the new website would retain this editability. DC expressed concern that Appendix 7 of the proposal was very prescriptive and is making decisions that should be made later. GD defended this text, saying that as webmaster, he would want authority to be able to get on with the job without excessive debate; he wants the remit to essentially act as he sees best, but of course with input along the way. The text of Appendix 7 is intended to deliver this.
- DC said there was some ambiguity about who was responsible for BCA online. GD said that he would be happy to take on responsibility for BCA Online too.
- LM suggested that anyone who doesn't feel they have sufficient information to make a decision in a vote can abstain. KH said however that the website is there to serve what the BCA want it to do, so this is a decision that affects everybody; she felt that Appendix 7 is too prescriptive.
- MS said that he knows GD well, citing numerous websites that GD already runs, saying that setting up a new caving website isn't something new for him. SA emphasised the Youth and Development report which suggests that the current website needs improvement.
- The discussion moved to a vote. ME clarified that the proposal wording has been amended to reflect the discussion to: ***"The AGM instructs BCA Council to appoint Gary Douthwaite as BCA webmaster, with a mandate to redevelop the website including, but not limited to BCA online***

and communications systems, and that Gary is provided with the necessary accesses and mandates as outlined in Appendix 7 to fulfil this role”.

Acceptance of proposal detailed above:

House of individuals: 4 against, 4 abstention, large majority in favour

House of groups: 4 against, 6 abstentions, large majority in favour

Result: Passed; BCA Council instructed accordingly.

26. Proposals from members that do affect the constitution

26.1. Abolition of P&I Standing Committee.

- AB felt that this is against the spirit of section 2.1 of the BCA constitution, which states: *“The Association is a national federation comprising: individuals; caving, mining and other related Clubs; Regional Caving Councils; and National Bodies with specialist interests, all of whom have autonomy in their own field; together with any other bodies who express an interest in caving, mining or other subterranean phenomena. All shall be referred to as Members, as applicable.”*
- DB called for comments from the proposer. JA said that after some reflection she does not specifically want to be a member of the BCA Executive, and so would be happy to amend the proposal to remove this and instead have the P&I as a single officer role. She reminded everyone that her background is in sales and marketing, so well suited to get things done. The one P&I meeting was only attended by a small number of people. She said that she would prefer to be able to get on with the job and that P&I is something that is best achieved not via Committee.
- RW praised JA’s efforts in the role previously but said that her position was like a square peg in a round hole. RW understood JA’s desire to get on with the job but would have rather she hadn’t resigned and had put forward her idea for change first.
- RW asked if perhaps JA would like to amend her proposal to have an appointment as P&I Officer which would be a sub-officer of the P&I Committee? JA emphasised her difficulties in performing the role as part of committees and working groups and did not feel that this was the best way forward to achieve results.
- HA suggested that she would be happy for just the executive aspect of JA’s proposal to be removed (i.e. create a single P&I Officer but not as member of the Executive). RN suggested that doing so could allow a P&I Officer with a working group to perhaps be developed back up to a Standing Committee in due course.
- BN said that he sees a lot of different opinions around the country on many matters and expressed concern about such a powerful position being given to just one person. SA said he understands BN’s point and doesn’t agree to making JA a member of the Executive but is also concerned by the disorganisation and indecision that committees can bring.
- AM felt that committees can work very well but the P&I existed for many years without a

Standing Committee meeting ever happening, and nobody cared. He felt that we really need to minimise bureaucracy.

- ME said that he fully supports JA's appointment to a P&I Officer role (not a committee). He attended the last P&I meeting, and although LW had done a great job making this happen, it was only attended by only a small fraction of the number of representatives a Standing Committee can have, so participation was very low, bringing into question the validity of the Standing Committee concept. ME emphasised that the P&I role is one that requires rapid responsiveness to current issues to avoid things becoming 'old news' by the time the Standing Committee next meet, and that this would be better served by one enthusiastic officer with authority to get on with the job, and of course, delegate some specific jobs (e.g. newsletter, website) as the current Standing Committee does.
- DC felt that the benefits of the Committee are that matters get discussed before they come to BCA Council, thus reducing discussion needed; Council meetings are too long already.
- HA suggested that to get this proposal moving we simply amend it to remove the mention of an Executive position. AR asked who the P&I Officer would report to; LW confirmed BCA Council, as before, just without the Standing Committee.
- TA put forward a suggestion for an amended proposal (JA confirmed this to be acceptable).

"That the P&I is abolished as a Standing Committee and replaced with a new position, the Publications and Information Officer, with responsibility for overseeing the outward facing publicity, promotion and information side of BCA functions including all current functions of the P&I committee."

Note: This is no longer a proposal affecting the constitution.

Acceptance of proposal as detailed above regarding P&I role:

House of individuals: 9 against, 4 abstention, large majority in favour

House of groups: 8 against, 5 abstentions, large majority in favour

Result: P&I Officer role created, standing Committee abolished

Action: ME to update Manual of Operations accordingly to remove P&I as a Standing Committee.

26.2. Removal of two house voting concurrent with online voting for individual members.

LW invited ME (proposer) to explain the proposal.

- ME felt that the current two-house voting system was not fit for purpose as it gives the same vote to a group with hundreds of members as it does to a group with only a few. Furthermore, he felt it duplicates representation, questioning why a group needs a vote when all the individual members of that group have a vote.
- ME questioned how democratic the system is, citing the example that he is a member of a club with 150-200 members, and that club is here at the meeting to vote against this proposal, yet it has not asked him, as a member, for his thoughts. He cited this as a big problem of group voting; votes being cast on behalf of hundreds of people but with no consultation.

- ME confirmed that he hasn't got anything against clubs; he is a club caver, he always has been and he probably always will be, but he sees the future role of clubs in BCA democracy as being about keeping their members informed of current matters and if the club feels strongly about something, they should lobby their members to vote in accordance with club wishes.
- ME acknowledged the uphill challenge of asking groups to vote to abolish their own vote, but felt that this is the right system to take forward to increase BCA participation and democracy. He also said that he understood that the two house voting system was currently needed to avoid a bunch of individuals turning up to an AGM and overwhelming the voting and getting their own way; hence why removal of the club vote would have to be accompanied by introduction of online voting for all AGM motions for all individual members.
- AE emphasised that lots of the constitutional changes in ME's proposals are semantics. ME clarified that when he started looking at the constitution with this proposal in mind, there were lots of sections that would be impacted and would need minor changes, and some thought was needed about how the resulting voting should work. He said he has tried to keep the changes made to only those relevant to the proposal. He emphasised that although he has tried to get things right, we can always address any further refinements in future years.
- PR invited someone against the proposal to speak. AB said that he thought we should be waiting for the Vision group to report, and citing section 2.1 of the constitution, said that this proposal disenfranchises groups. He felt that the clubs are a 'safety net' for members who don't care about BCA politics; he believed that ~90% of people who go caving know that the BCA exists and are happy to entrust that they are doing the right thing.
- IW asked whether the online voting could be enabled for the current two-house system. ME confirmed that yes (although more complicated), but he has chosen to intrinsically link the two because the removal of the two house system cannot happen unless an alternative system is in place to enable all individual members to vote outside of the meeting.
- HA clarified that she felt this proposal should not be held up because of anything to do with the Vision working group.
- DB felt that any club which votes against this is disenfranchising its own members.
- WB expressed concern that his SUI vote (representing the whole of Ireland) carried the same weight as the vote of a much smaller club; he felt this was unfair.
- TA felt that the changes would help to increase participation.
- CW asked what votes at an AGM would go to an online vote. ME said that this was a good question; certainly, all of those that would usually be voted on under a two-house system and contested election positions. ME emphasised that the Manual of Operations would need to be updated to add some clarity on this.
- RW asked for clarity on whether ME was suggesting allowing clubs to still be BCA members, but he was seeking to deprive them of their vote; ME confirmed that this is correct.

- LW progressed this to a vote (noting 70% majority needed for constitutional change):

Acceptance of ME's proposal and constitutional changes to abolish two house voting system:

House of individuals: 7 against, 1 abstention, 67 votes in favour

House of groups: 10 against, 2 abstentions, 24 votes in favour ^^

Result: Passed, can be progressed to a ballot of all members.

^^ An initial vote counted 10 against, 1 abstention, 25 in favour (pass) however the result reported above represents a more rigorous recount as it was so close. A discussion between the Executive was held to decide if an abstention should be counted as a vote for the purposes of calculating percentage in favour. The decision was taken that an abstention should not be counted. The motion therefore passes (by both the initial count and recount), exceeding 70% in support.

Action: Executive/DC/WW/GD: Progress to a ballot of all members.

Other Business

27. HJ confirmed that the Independent Examiner is to be confirmed.

28. Annual General Meeting 2020 confirmed as 14th June 2020 10:30, venue to be confirmed.

29. No other business informed to Chairman in advance.

Meeting closed 14:28pm.

Summary of actions from this meeting:

Responsibility	Action
ME	Update 2018 AGM minutes with corrections and publish as final.
HJ	Report on progress of instructor insurance to October Council meeting.
ME/HJ	Table personal accident insurance for discussion at October Council meeting and present budget with and without this.
ME	Table liability insurance value (i.e. raising to £10m, just for Minera or for entire policy) for discussion at the October Council Meeting.
ME	Table a review of Manual of Operations with respect to procedures for applying for positions and submitting proposals for the October Council meeting.
ME/GD	Update BCA website with policies accepted at this meeting,
ME/GD	Update BCA website with new BCA Council members.
ME/GD	Update Manual of Operations with new Standing Committee terms of reference accepted at this meeting.
JA	Progress New to Caving leaflet to production and distribution.
GD	Finalise new logo and compile 'press pack' for new logo and distribute as quickly as possible and update on website.
Everyone	All who use logo anywhere to update to new logo.
ME/GD	Update Manual of Operations accordingly for removal of Publications and Information Standing Committee.
Exec/DC/WW/GD	Progress constitutional changes proposed by ME (regarding two house voting) to a ballot of all members.