



Annual General Meeting 2020 Minutes

AGM originally scheduled for 14th June 2020: This date was changed due to the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Rescheduled for: Sunday 11th October, via Tele-conferencing 10:30 .am.
An electronic vote on appointments and motions followed the meeting.

Arrangements were made for any member who required a paper vote to post a request (enclosing an S.A.E) to the BCA Secretary, BCA Registered Office, The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8RG for receipt before the 11th Oct 2020 (i.e. the AGM). No requests were received.

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Present

Name	Initials	Name	Initials
Phil Rowsell	PJR	Dave Botcherby	DB
Howard Jones	HJJ	Stephan Natynczuk	SN
Russell Myers	RM	Graham Mullan	GM
Ari Cooper-Davis	AC-D	Gethin Thomas	GT
Jenny Potts	JP	Andrew McLeod	AMcL
Pete Burgess	PB	Pete Knight	PK
Wayne Sheldon	WS	Idris Williams	IW
Tim Allen	TA	Will Burn	WB
Robert Scott	RS	Rostam Namaghi	RN
Andrew Hinde	AH	Nigel Atkins	NA
David Rose	DR	Martin Hoff	MH
Graham Price	GP	Linda Wilson	LW
Josh White	JW	Ged Campion	GC
Hellie Adams	HA		

(1) Welcome from the Chair.

PR welcomed everyone to this, the first virtual BCA AGM with the sad news of the death of the President, Mick Day who passed away on Sunday 13th September 2020. After outlining Mick's achievements and contribution to caving, the meeting paused for a few moments silence to mark his memory.

PR continued his address with thanks to the outgoing Council Members who were standing down for their contribution to the Association. Additionally, he singled out the IT Working Group for a special thank you for working flat out developing the new Website, setting up and implementing the electronic voting

(2) Apologies for absence and verification of quorum.

John Cordingley
 Tony Radmall
 Ric Haliwell
 Pat Haliwell
 Stuart France
 Allan Richardson
 Chris Boardman
 Richard Vooght
 Juliet Parker-Smith

Andy Eavis

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate with over 10 members in attendance.

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

No other items were raised to be considered under AOB

(4) **Acceptance of minutes from the June 2019 AGM (available on BCA website).**

The minutes of the 2019 AGM with minor changes were accepted on a proposal by Wayne Sheldon seconded by Idris Williams with 3 abstentions.

Minor changes to minutes requested by email:

(a) Add Lyndon Easterbrook to attendee list as voting for ULSA.

(b) Section 22.1 correct Honorary President to one year term in line with constitution.

(5) Action items from 2019 AGM

All the action items from 2019 have been achieved.

(6) Reports

The Chair outlined the approach to dealing with the individual reports whereby anyone with a query would approach the author in the first instance and only bring their question to today's meeting if they had not received a satisfactory answer. The following Reports had been submitted:

Executive reports:

- 6.1 Acting Chair (Phil Rowsell)
- 6.2 Acting Secretary (Russell Myers)
- 6.3 Treasurer (Howard Jones)

Insurance and Membership:

- 6.4 Membership Administrator (Wendy Williams)
- 6.5 Insurance Manager (Howard Jones)

Conservation and Access:

- 6.6 Acting Conservation and Access Officer (Will Burns)
- 6.7 CRoW Working Party (David Rose)

Publications and Information:

- 6.8 Publications and Information Officer (Rostam Namaghi)
- 6.9 Newsletter Editor (David Rose)
- 6.10 British Caving Library (Jenny Potts)

Information Technology:

- 6.15 IT Working Party (Ari Cooper Davies)

Training and Qualifications:

- 6.16 Training Officer (Nigel Atkins)
- 6.17 Qualifications Management Committee (Juliet Parker-Smith)

Equipment and Techniques:

- 6.18 Equipment and Techniques Officer (Mark Sims)
- 6.19 Rope Testing (Bob Mehew)

Youth Development and Vision:

- 6.20 Youth and Development Officer (Josh White)
- 6.21 Vision Working Party (Hellie Adams)

Safeguarding and Safety:

- 6.22 Safeguarding (Chris Boardman)
- 6.23 Radon Working Party (Gethin Thomas)

Representatives to other bodies:

- 6.24 UIS Representative (Andy Eavis)
- 6.25 FSE Representative (Ged Campion)

The Chair asked if anyone has any questions.

Dave Botcherby asked for clarification by the Training Officer of the coaching guidelines and the national coaching scheme. The Training Officer NA replied that the scheme had in effect become train the trainers within Clubs and unmanageable with variations across the country and was being referred to the Training Committee for further consideration.

The Reports were accepted on a proposal by Idris Williams, seconded Any McLeod with 2 abstentions.

(7) Election of BCA Council Members for vacancies arising in 2020

The Chair described how the candidates would be given a short period of time to speak in support of their nomination and due to the time restraints we were under they would be limited by the Chair. The process this year was to put all elections out to electronic vote including single candidates for any one position recognising the 2019 AGM which had established that single candidates would be subject to a vote to be elected into position.

Roles and Nominations 2020 AGM					
Role (as at 02/08/2020)	Name	Nomination	Proposed	Second	Notes
<u>BCA President</u> <u>12 months</u>	Mick Day	Proposal to remove the position by Tim Allen; Second Jane Allen			
<u>BCA Executive</u>					
Chairman <u>2018 – 2021</u>	Les Williams Resigned	Phil Rowsell	Russell Myers	Howard Jones	Seeking endorsement Tenure 2021
Treasurer 2017-2020	Howard Jones	Howard Jones	Paul Ibberson	Phil Walker	Tenure 2021/2022/2023
Secretary (Acting) 2019 -2022	Matt Ewles resigned	Russell Myers	Paul McWhinney	John Helm	Seeking endorsement Tenure 2021/2022
Equipment and Techniques Officer 2017- 2020	Mark Sims	Current Tenure expired	Currently vacant		Tenure 2021/2022/2023
<u>Individual Member Representatives</u>					
Position 1 - 2019-2021	Phil Rowsell	Incumbent			There are 4 candidates for 2 positions
Position 2 - 2019-2021	Will Burn	Incumbent			
Position 3 - 2018-2020	Andrew McLeod	Andrew McLeod	Ari Cooper-Davies	Jo White	
Position 4 - 2018-2020	Jenny Potts	Jenny Potts	Wayne Sheldon	Mike Higgins	
	Pete Knights	Pete Knights	Jenny Potts	Wayne Sheldon Mike Higgins	

	Martin Hoff	Martin Hoff	Paul Craddy	David Eason	
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Election statements:

The Chair introduced his election statement with a request for a big push to get us all functioning together. There were no questions.

Election statement of Phil Rowsell standing for BCA Chair

The Vision Of the Chair of the British Caving Association

Recently the BCA has not been in a good place, effectively broken and plagued by infighting resulting in a septic atmosphere. As a result, in the last 4 months, 6 council members (two from the Executive) have resigned. This has left the BCA crippled and barely functioning, and a laughing stock to our members, whose only benefit, is as a method to get caving insurance. To make matters worse, our world has been turned upside down by Covid-19, which has only served to exacerbate the problem.

As a result, I thought it necessary that I step up to the plate and get involved to try and move the BCA forward for the good of British Caving. I was recently ratified by BCA Council with an overwhelming mandate by Council Members. I was both honoured and humbled by this, and the respect and trust Council Members have bestowed on me. I hope too, the membership will also reflect this.

My goal is to turn the BCA around to be a powerful National Body, promoting caving and one valued by its members, dispelling the myth that BCA is only full of infighting and merely about insurance.

My Vision

Short term: The most important thing to do is to get the BCA functioning properly;

We need to create a culture whereby we conduct our business in a respectful manor, trying to understand others point of views etc, so that in disputes compromise can be reached. We need to clear the backlog, pickup the balls that have been dropped. We have moved to regular shorter (2 hour) Council Zoom meetings with targeted agendas rather than the all day epics of the past. Our Work Groups/Committees will be expected to present their work at times to Council, to ensure they are functioning and heading in a direction that the BCA believe is correct.

Probably the most important task is that BCA needs a website fit for a prestigious national body, with a back end functionality for BCA to engage with its members and vice versa. Our Constitution and Manual of Operations is out of date and ambiguous. Changes are occurring in a piecemeal fashion, exacerbating the problem, so a new working group will be formed to review and re-write them for presentation at the 2021 BCA AGM.

Medium & Long term:

Our sport is dying, we are losing cavers to other sports through events like foot and mouth and now Covid -19 but also due to the lack of proactivity by the BCA. Our demographics are heavily stacked to an aging population. If we are not careful, our sport we love will die. This I think will be a great travesty.

To prevent this, we need to give our full support to the Y&D working group, the Scouts, the Universities via CHECC and our Caving Clubs to encourage and nurture as many new cavers into our sport as possible. Through the Conservation and Access Working Group, while conserving our caves, we need to make access easy and open for all. The comment "We need a cohesive joined up approach" rings home to the core, in that we have been so focused on infighting that we have forgotten the bigger picture.

We need to educate our cavers better in all aspects of our sport; caving techniques, rescue, expeditions and science. The BCA Training Committee and QMC (Qualifications Management Committee) are the foundation blocks to provide great training to our cavers. The recent Thai rescue has shown the world how good BCRC and cavers are. British Expeditions (assisted by GPF) are renowned and revered around the world. BCRA is doing some great science, which with improved funding for BCRA workshops and research projects, we can show cavers how interesting and important cave science actually is.

Finally, the BCA need to start looking out for issues that are on or coming over the horizon, so that we can influence government decisions at an early stage rather than having to live with the consequences.

In summarising, there is an awful lot to do. We are all volunteers giving up as much of our precious time as each sees fit. By pulling together, encouraging more of our membership (particularly the young) to be involved in the BCA, we can make the changes.

My door is always open. I hope people will come and air their grievances, ideas etc. I hope the membership will tell me what BCA is not doing correctly, what we should be doing and perhaps with time, what BCA is doing correctly ;-)

I hope you will work with me (and the BCA Council), to move forward, in the knowledge we are trying to do our best for British Caving, for the good of the BCA rather than its destruction, to build that National Association members are proud of and value and thereby ensuring that our sport grows in time rather than dies.

My thanks and dedication

Phil Rowsell

Re-Election statement of Howard Jones for Treasurer and Insurance Manager

I am standing for re-election to the post of Treasurer and Insurance Manager roles that I have been carrying out for most of the last two years now. I am a retired qualified accountant which I believe gives me the required qualifications to do both roles. My experience shows I spend on average 10 hours a week on BCA matters and being retired gives me the time to be dedicated to the task. I have been caving for over 50 years in the UK and have been fortunate enough to cave around the world on exploratory expeditions. I am still an active caver in the UK and Spain. Unlike other members of BCA Council, I don't have a strategic view of the future of the organisation but I see my role as tactical support to others however I do have a few ideas as follows.

Since its inception in 2003, BCA has built up a large amount of cash reserves and I would like to see BCA use some of those reserves to promote a caving legacy in the UK which I believe would be of more benefit to members than cash sat in a deposit account earning very little interest.

Our public liability policy is the envy of other outdoor sport bodies both in scope and costs and I will hope to enhance that position in coming years. In my role to date I have liaised with counterparts in other outdoor sports which is very useful to compare and contrast to our situation and discussions have shown

that both our QMC setup and pl policy are both excellent member benefits. If elected I intend to serve my three year term and then I will retire as after 5 years in the post it will be time for some new blood. Thankyou very much.

Russell Myers introduced his election statement with nothing to add and no further questions were asked.

Election statement of Russell Myers Standing for BCA Secretary

First and fore most I must state that I am a dyed in the wool caver having discovered caving at 16 years old on a trip down Bar Pot into Gaping Gill with the Craven Pothole Club. Memories of that trip have stayed with me ever since and triggered a lifelong love for adventure and caving in particular. I joined the Craven Pothole Club shortly after that first trip and have remained a member ever since.

During this time, I have caved in most regions of the UK and occasionally ventured further afield to Ireland and the Continent and would consider myself a competent experienced, caver albeit finding that these days, the caves appear to be shrinking. In addition to caving, I have also rock climbed and mountaineered in both the UK and abroad and have an abiding love for the Isle of Skye and Scottish mountains in general.

I have lived my life on the basis of putting more back in than I take out of whatever activity that may be, including work and play. I was elected to the Craven Pothole Club Committee in 1974, served in various positions until 2002 including Assistant Secretary, Secretary, Chairman and was honoured to be elected President in 2012. These roles invariably involved administrative duties and over the course of time, I have developed working computer skills to augment them.

I cannot remember the dates but I acted as CPC representative to the Council of Northern Caving Clubs and served as its Chairman during the 1990s. I also represented the CNCC at the NCA for a number of years prior to it evolving in to the BCA

I am widowed, retired from full time work and have worked in local government and latterly the private sector as a health and safety consultant. I find myself time rich and pleased to be able to offer my skills to the BCA as Secretary for the organisation.

Russell Myers

13th April 2020

Chair introduced the election for the positions of individual representatives and as he had stood down from one of them, opened the election to four nominations for three positions. Two would be for 2 year terms to 2022 and the third for one year until 2021 and the positions filled on their voting result. He asked the individual candidates to speak and requested any questions be asked at the end.

Martin Hoff introduced his statement explaining he had no manifesto specifically for this post as he was standing as a caver who goes caving and used to taking what is placed in front of him, thinking about it and assessing it on the basis of what cavers think. Thankyou very much.

Election statement of Martin Hoff standing for Individual Representative:

I've been going to the Hidden Earth conference since it was the BCRA conference but I'd never been to a BCA AGM till 2019, when I attended because I was concerned by some things I was hearing and

wanted to get my own perspective with my own eyes and ears rather than have things filtered through anyone else's views first.

BCA members may have seen my underground photos in the BCA Newsletter or in the Hidden Earth photo salon, they may have occasionally spotted my photos or read some of my words in Descent or sat through the one lecture I have given at Hidden Earth. There are a number of foreign trip reports which have carried my contributions in various forms, some of those trips benefiting from the Ghar Parau Foundation's generous support.

I have been caving for nearly thirty years, been a member of my local cave rescue team for most of that, belonging to only three different caving clubs in all that time though I cave with members of many different clubs. I have some familiarity with caving club committees and access bodies so I'm aware of the potential upside if the BCA decides it can do without me on this occasion!

To date I have been underground in a dozen countries on four continents and you'll usually find me caving in south Wales, where I have managed 16 caving or digging trips in 2020 despite the Covid-19 travel restrictions - it's not a competition but this is a clue that I'm a caver with an interest in related issues rather than a meeting collector.

If there's room for a fresh face on Council as an Individual Rep, it's probably about time I took a greater interest in what's going on.

Martin Hoff, July 2020

Pete Knight introduced himself with a background in all camps but doesn't bring a personal agenda to the table but sees himself in a role representing the individual membership as opposed to stamp my own agenda on it. I won't be offended if I'm not elected into the role but put my hand up to take on a position at BCA if it what was vacant.

Election statement of Pete Knight Standing for Individual Representative:

Pete Knight BCA Member 9362

pete@peakinstruction.com

Born 1982 Caving since 2001 Main region Derbyshire & North Wales. Often in the Dales too.

Background Holder of the BCA Cave Instructor Certificate since 2010 and a Trainer/Assessor for the LCMLA scheme and probationary T/A for the CIC (mines) scheme.

I run a small outdoor pursuits company in the Peak area. I work underground all across the UK. Technical advisor for caving and mine exploration to a number of different UK firms. Also work at Spanset as a height safety trainer.

Founder and Chairman of the Darkside Caving & Mining Club (since 2008)

Member of the TSG, YSS, CATMHS and PDMHS

Team Leader in Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation

Chairman (about to stand down) of the Peak Instructed Caving Affiliation (since March 2015)

Projects Officer for the Derbyshire Caving Association (since March 2014)

Former Association of Caving Instructors rep to NCP (now QMC) (c2015/16)

Short statement

I put myself forward for this post as a candidate that has roots in all aspects of caving but who has spent the bulk of their time as an individual caver, rather than a club member. I have lived in a number of caving regions around the UK and feel I have an understanding of local issues, but my focus will be fixed on what is best for UK cavers and mine explorers as a whole. Despite the list of caving bodies and organisations I belong to, I'm not a cave politician! I am far more comfortable making mine shafts

safe for DCA than I am making policy, but I think it is that attitude that sees the BCA short on volunteers. So with that in mind, I wish to do my part as an active caver and support BCA with my time. I would be keen to see a modernising BCA emerge to proudly sit alongside organisations like the BMC and British Canoeing as a representative of its members' interests at national and local level.

Andrew McLeod introduced himself having stood on BCA Council for 2 years now and seeking re-election to represent all cavers. He has been round all 5 regions and is a member of four clubs but still a direct individual member so involved but separate from all the regions and has a progressive view point. He has got involved with the IT Working Group so will continue doing something useful regardless of the election and has also joined the Constitution and Manual of Operations Working Group.

Election statement of Andrew McLeod standing for Individual Representative:

I am applying to stand again as an Individual Member Representative of the BCA, having just completed a 2-year post. I have attended all but one of the BCA Council meetings during my tenure. I have stood previously on a caving club committee and I am the Dachstein expedition treasurer. As well as expedition caving, I also have an interest in cave science and I am a BCRA member, have attended several of their field meetings and am keen to further support the BCRA at BCA Council.

As a Welsh caver who started caving while living in Devon, mostly caved in the Mendips, and now live in Yorkshire, I have in my brief caving career covered many regions of British caving and think of myself only as a British caver. Similarly, although I am a member of four clubs (EUSS, BEC, YSS and SWCC) I am a direct individual member of the BCA. I have always tried to bring this region-agnostic view to often fractious BCA Council meetings.

I would nonetheless consider myself a progressive member seeking to improve the relationship between the BCA and individual cavers, and it is through this that I hope to again represent individual members, and to bring to attention to Council the issues that affect everyday cavers who are trying to carry out their sport and science of caving. For this reason I joined the BCA Vision group seeking to develop a brighter future for BCA, which will (coronavirus permitting) produce a report at a subsequent AGM.

Jenny Potts outlined her experience in the various caving regions and abroad and meets cavers, talks to cavers. She has been involved in quite a lot of administration and thinks that BCA needs to go forward as teams of people working together and see it improve and become really really useful. She thought we had a team that can

Election statement of Jenny Potts standing for Individual Representative

Joined Derbyshire-based Orpheus Caving Club in 1965 and have caved with the club all over the UK and Ireland as well as abroad in Europe, the USA and Canada. Club visits to Arctic Norway in the 1960s, '70s and '80s where I was involved in discovery and surveying of new caves. Posts held within my Club: Librarian, Newsletter Editor, Bulletin Editor; currently Cottage Booking Secretary, Chairman and Honorary Member.

Also a currently member of South Wales C. C. and for several years a member of Shepton Mallet C. C.

DCA Secretary and also Treasurer for periods from 1968 onwards, stood down in 2018 and was elected an Honorary Member. Currently handling DCA publications sales. Served as DCA representative on NCA and BCA Councils until 2020.

1st. Secretary of NCA from 1970 to 1975 and have also acted as temporary Secretary of BCA on a couple of occasions when the elected secretary had to drop out. Editor of NCA Newsletter SpeleoScene from 1993 to 2004. Member of the group of individual cavers who organised a 1992 survey and ballot of a selection of 3000 cavers; this eventually led to the introduction of Club Membership for NCA, as opposed to it being just a federation of regional councils and constituent bodies. This in turn led to the transformation of NCA into BCA with its individual membership system.

As DCA representative on BCA Council, in 2013 I proposed BCA investigate the subject of access to caves as part of the CRoW Act, becoming the first leader of the BCA CRoW Working Party. This led to the eventual ballot of all BCA members which confirmed BCA's position in favour of CRoW applying to access to caves.

Individual Member of BCRA Council for a number of years; helped to set up the British Caving Library in 2008 and became responsible for its organisation and running on behalf of BCRA/BCA in 2009.

I am a supporter of the continuing evolution of BCA into a national body that all British cavers can be proud to be a part of.

Jenny Potts, 29/8/20

Questions

RN asked PK and MH to expand on their statements.

PK stated he would like to see BCA move forward, modernise and make use of the expertise and volunteer groups coming together. He was in favour of the open access campaign and the judicial review. He said that when referring to not putting his personal input forward, he would listen to individual cavers and put forward their views.

MH stated that he was not sure democracy is well served by people turning up and telling everybody that they already have all of the answers and the basis for what he said was that Martin was not the platform for what BCA wants but an opportunity to put forward what the cavers that he caved with and the people he spoke to, tell him. So he was interested in taking the issues as they come up. The fact he was standing tells that he was not 100% satisfied with the way the BCA appears to have been going in the recent times. We have obviously got big things with access in different parts of the country. He thought he had a handle on what the cavers he knew think and that is where he was looking to go with this. The cavers think that access is something that is handled locally in different ways in different areas. They think that the BCA is not so much to do with them as it might be and that is one of the ways in which I can make a contribution. He further added that he was not entrenched in the position that others may be regarding access.

Group Representatives

In the absence of Lydia Leather, the Secretary read out her election statement.

Election statement of Lydia Leather for Club Representative

I have been caving for four years with Nottingham University Caving Club (NUCC), as President, welfare officer, and kit officer; during that time, we were able to increase our club active membership from three to thirty (x10). I can provide an outlook on what struggles student clubs have to overcome in order to survive, issues such as, their quick turn over of members, member experience and training, and managing concerns of Student Union's regarding the sport's safety.

Outside of NUCC, I had the chance to attend expeditions with ICCG, ULCA, SUSS as well as the Treviso Caves project and the 2019 Tennessee expedition. I will be co-leading the 2020/21 CUCC expedition. We aim to make the expedition more accessible and engaging to the wider Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (CHECC) community. We are on track to have expedition participants fourteen different student clubs. My involvement in these experiences enables me to understand the need to encourage inter-club connections. For example, these connections ensures clubs that don't have the access to specific resources are still able still to build their skills.

Last year I co-ran the first caving women weekend for northern clubs, which focussed on training and building community outside of individual clubs, and this year our aim is to expand the entire UK. The event voiced barriers the female demographic have within the community which I believe I can reflect within the BCA.

My proposer

Ryan Boulton (NUCC publicity officer) BCA number: 18031

Seconder

Charlotte Payne (NUCC treasurer). 19681

Thank you for considering my application

Lydia Leather

BCA number: 16672

IW introduced his election statement with a brief synopsis pointing out that he is standing for re-election.

British Caving Association AGM 2020 Election of Club Representative on Council Personal Statement from Idris Williams.

I first became involved with BCA (or NCA as it then was), in the late nineties when I was arm twisted into becoming NCA training officer. I had for a few years prior to that been interested in Recreational Caver Training and had started with the pathway into the Local Cave Leader award. During time I had a steep learning curve into the professional side of Training. I held this post for about 5 years until a more suitable candidate came forth allowing me to step down.

About this time I helped to found the Association of Scout Caving Teams (now transformed into the National Scout Caving Support Unit), and as Chairman represented this organisation on BCA Council for many years.

I think that with the removal of the Club vote the role of Club representative will become more important and if elected, suggest to Clubs that they should use me to bring matters that affect them to my notice.

A little about myself. I am by nature in favour of the many reforms being currently introduced to BCA but feel that we should be cautious to avoid "the baby being thrown out with the bathwater". I first went caving in 1962 with Senior Scouts and then went on to University College Cardiff where I joined the Caving & Climbing Club. We caved mostly in S.Wales but had trips to Yorkshire, Derbyshire and also Mendip when the Severn Bridge opened.

During my time at College I joined S.W.C.C. and have been a member ever since. I am also a member of Shropshire Mining & Caving club who introduced me to the delights of old mines.

I have caved in most corners of the British Isles but due to family & work commitments never was able to partake in Expedition Caving.

I have always been passionate about caving & introducing new people into the activity. In 1989 I started taking my Venture Scouts underground. Since that date my main interest has been Scout Caving.

Group Reps

The Chair asked if there were any questions for the nominees to Group Representatives and receiving none moved on to the position of :

Conservation and Access Officer noting that Will Burn WB was seeking ratification of his position having been co-opted by Council for the remaining 2 year period of the current 3 year tenure. The Chair asked WB if he wished to address the meeting:

Verbal statement of Will Burn in support of his ratification for the position of Conservation and Access Officer.

My name is Will Burn, I'm a Derbyshire caver and been around on the BCA Council for about 5 years and hoped that C&A would be his last post and that you will vote for me. Before that I did work in DCA, specifically in their conservation forums. In terms of my CV, I'm a conservation scientist. I examined how to manage upland environments so quite experienced in conservation terms. I like to think I spend a lot of time talking to land owners although not about caves but have a lot of experience in that regard. Conservation and access are two important areas to balance and so I would be keen to take this on. Thankyou.

There were no questions asked of WB.

Equipment and Training Officer.

The Chair commented on this position in that the Executive had overlooked the fact that the position had reached the end of its current period of tenure. The incumbent, Mark Sims MS, had been busy of late in his private life and the Chair had discussed the situation with him. MS was keen to carry on in post and the Executive suggested he be co-opted at the next Council meeting.

There were no further questions and the Chair adjourned the meeting for a break.

The Chair reconvened the Meeting with the next agenda item, 11 proposals; some of the original proposals had been withdrawn leaving 1 to 10 still standing and 18 proposed by TA & JA. He asked TA if they still stood or if he wished to remove any of them. TA responded that he would like to withdraw the proposal on social media No 18 explaining it was a qualifying proposal to one already withdrawn which could be handled elsewhere and he would like the others to go forward.

The Chair pointed out that before considering the proposals we need to vote on accepting them before they can go forward to the electronic ballot and suggested grouping them together to save some time. We would vote on all the proposals going to the electorate and needed at least 10 people at the AGM or 25% whichever is the less. He invited AMcL to propose this vote, which would be by poll over Zoom and asked a second to put all the proposals to the electronic ballot. HJJ seconded the motion.

After polling, 18 people representing 78% carried the motion for all the proposals to go to the electronic ballot. There were 3 no votes, 2 abstained and 1 vote not cast.

HJJ pointed out for those following the transmission of the meeting that we would be discussing the proposals now but the electronic voting would begin after the AGM.

The Chair announced that in discussions at Council, recognising the limitations of the electronic AGM, amendments or corrections would not be accepted to the proposals. Following the AGM, members would receive an email linked to an electronic ballot form, which will be open for 20 days enabling them to vote on both the people nominated for positions and the proposals that have been put to the AGM.

There were no questions and the Chair moved on to the proposals and outlined how the proposers would have 2 to 3 minutes to address the meeting.

(8) Proposals to BCA AGM 2020

TA addressed the meeting thanking the IT Convener and his group for pulling all the IT together to hold the meeting and the forthcoming voting system. He asked to speak about the proposals collectively as 1 to 7 and 9 to save time. Some of you may already know this but these are not actually his proposals although he did put his name to them because he felt they needed to go before the membership. They were actually drafted by the ex-BCA Secretary Matt Ewles after very careful consideration and study of the Constitution over his period of time in office. He planned to put these to what would have been the June AGM. Unfortunately, he resigned his position and his proposals were resigned with him. They had been circulated widely and he (TA) had seen them and felt that as a legacy towards modernisation, it would be a real shame that these carefully considered proposals would die a death so that was why he had put his name to them and Jane had seconded for everyone to see. He emphasised that he had no involvement in drafting these proposals whatsoever. He thought it fair that the membership look at these and see if they like them.

TA said that he did understand that the Chair PJR is leading a group to look at the Constitution and that one or two other proposals had been withdrawn in favour of that working group. For two and half years now from the AGM in 2018, we have had a Vision and Constitution Reform WG active under the convenorship of Hellie Adams and that may have changes to the Constitution. So probably this is likely to be quite a long job for the wholesale reform of the BCA Constitution and guessed there would need to be quite a lot of consultation to form a consensus to get something wholesale through. So the future looks good for reforming the Constitution and sees these 8 proposals which originated with Matt Ewles as a first stage reform and if they are successful or any of them, then they would offer quite a guide to the Chair's WG as to what is going to be acceptable by the membership and perhaps what isn't. TA thought he couldn't answer any specific questions himself although he wholeheartedly supported them.

The Chair said we would go through them sequentially and if anyone has any questions to notify him.

a) Constitutional & Manual of Operations changes

Proposal 1 A total re-write of Section 3 Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

- 3.1. To represent and act as a national spokesperson and point of contact for caving in the United Kingdom.
- 3.2. To disseminate relevant information to cavers nationally.
- 3.3. To provide a membership system and associated democratic platform for caving matters of national significance.
- 3.4. To remain responsive to the needs and wishes of our Members.
- 3.5. To support or implement appropriate initiatives involving but not limited to cave conservation, access, science, training, equipment and welfare.
- 3.6. To encourage responsible participation in caving, emphasising that this must go together with training, conservation and education to ensure a safe and sustainable future.
- 3.7. To challenge and eliminate barriers to participation in caving.

RN pointed out a podcast he had produced which put more context to the proposals which we do not have time for here. He also asked if we had fixed the numbering issue with them. The Chair replied this would be addressed when we got to number 2.

Proposal 2: Total rewrite of Section 4 (Guiding Principles) of the constitution as follows: (Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

- 4.1. Caving is an outdoor activity that promotes a healthy lifestyle with accompanying social and mental enrichment for many participants.
- 4.2. Caving should be embraced as a multi-faceted activity spanning exploration, science, technology, arts, sport, and conservation, all of which are valued.
- 4.3. Caving bodies who facilitate or manage access have a responsibility to make all possible effort to minimise the number of restrictions, to ensure that access is freely available to all cavers and to prevent discrimination in access availability.
- 4.3. The Association should foster a culture of respect with a zero-tolerance attitude to discrimination including on grounds of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, creed, colour, occupation, religion or political opinion.

The Chair pointed out a typo in Proposal 2 where point 4 is also labelled 4.3 and in the forthcoming ballot, have corrected this to be 4.4 which has no material effect on the proposal. Pete Burgess PB made a comment arising from the podcast about this proposal being a stick with potential to beat members with, regarding perceived discrimination and until BCA has gained more trust from its members and has demonstrated it is not being driven by partisan group, that although this is a worthy aim itself, it leaves a sense of unease with me. The Chair asked how that may be worked out. PB responded that it would be for the working group to consider but he would like to see how the group goes and then offer to help. The Chair responded that he hope he came across as a non-polarised caver and steer the working group so that we have something that fits. PB responded it is past issues regarding age which is known about and everyone needs to get on board and is easy with this and if they are not it is going to continue to cause division and its not good.

The Chair pointed out that we do need to stop previous stuff coming up and we can put the North /South divide away now .

RN It was more going to be a technical point , I understand where his concerns are coming from and the issues being referenced having been as one of the partisans involved although I don't think that was quite , the technical thing is the change to 4 wouldn't be cited in any complaint or intervention. However, one of the later proposals which is a change to Section 10 feasibly could be. Very technical I'm not dismissing the point of the argument it's just there. I don't think that just changing Section 4 and adding age again because that is effectively the change he is talking about that actually changes anything. The reason it doesn't change anything is at the last AGM we had a policy put in place which included age and discrimination and it is current BCA policy not to just discriminate against age and point 1 that stick is still available to beat the members with.

Chair asked if we any further questions.

Jenny JP has one worry if we are going to put these out to general ballot , I am assuming these proposals are put forward as a set and they either all require to be passed or they all require to be removed. I wonder if we get a situation where some are passed and some are not, whether we will be in a position where we have again, a dysfunctional Constitution where sensible amendments are passed and others would compete with them and not passed because one of our problems in the past has been that amendments to the Constitution have been passed without due regard to their effects on other parts of the Constitution. A Constitution is a guideline , it isn't set in stone and it isn't treated word by word. They are a general guideline and if we are going to move BCA forward and we find that we have some proposals passed and others rejected, are we going to be in a position in the following year to say that the Constitutional and WP is going to be able to re-amend any proposals which turn out not to fit in or are they going to be able to re-introduce proposals which we feel should have been past but were not.

The chair responded that his understanding was they would all be voted on individually on the ballot, so yes, we could have a ballot where some will pass and some will not pass. His understanding of his remit from Council regarding the Constitution and Manual of Operations, is we will consider all aspects of the Constitution with the Vision Group and it could be that we are proposing that something which has been passed, that in looking at all this we might re-instate it if it has been taken out. He thought that ME went through the Constitution previously and has done a good job and considered everything and that these proposals have been thought through carefully but that is a decision for the membership. His understanding from the WG he is heading up, is, they will consider everything.

Graham Mullan GM would like to second Jenny's point there and really what you just said about the WG you are heading up that there is little point on voting on these proposals if in fact in a year's time your group is going to present us with a holistic wholly worked prose and wholly coherent , new Constitution set up and Manual of Operations. That being the case whatever we pass now in the next 20 to 30 days is up for re-consideration and it means that frankly these proposals should have been pulled otherwise you are just doing the job twice.

The Chair responded that they have been proposed and not been pulled so we are duty bound to vote on them.

Will Burn WB With all due respect to those previous comments, people have been saying that for years and years and that PJR would do a good job but it is time the membership had a say in that and when they do, PJR can use it as a guide.

RN echoes WB's comments. The deletion ones at a Council Meeting adopt the old clauses into the Manual of Operations if we find an issue so in terms of a technical thing, if we find we are left with a loophole because we have deleted things we do actually have a relative work around for that but it does require people to have read these things. One of my concerns with the proposals overall is that ME went through this very carefully and the way I look at these proposals is more these are proposals you need to put in place if you wanted to keep this Constitution. This is a middle ground approach so it is not a radical thing that some people are proposing and certainly that he would like to see. Given some of the Manual of Operation's changes by ME, taking his word on it is a little suspect and is not a denigration of ME, he fully supported him as BCA Secretary and thought he did a wonderful job and he clearly had a vision of how the organisation should work. The problem is that other people have different visions and stick to different rules within it so we need people in place who will take heed of the written changes on the paper because at the moment we are changing lots of things on the written paper and just completely ignoring them and we have done for the last 5 years . Two of the areas highlighting this point in the proposals are caused by using an old version of the Constitution because we had multiple copies of various amended copies on the website which cause him no end of hassle when he was putting his voting procedure report together and got 60% of the way through and realised he was using an outdated load of documentation. So he would encourage everyone to read it through and also the podcast.

Dave Rose DR Wanted to pick up what PB was saying. Can't see how we could possibly disagree with Proposal 2 4.4 . Obviously cultural respect , no discrimination surely has to be a starting point for any modern organisation. He could see what perhaps is concerning you is 4.3 – PB ? PB indicated yes. DR thought that part of the conversation was taking part in code which baffled him and maybe we should clarify it. PB stated that the aim is fine but there has to be circumstances where someone will claim a discrimination, waste time effort, money and it turns out not be because they are doing it vexatiously almost and we don't need that. People need to understand there are occasions where it isn't possible and it is outside our control to allow everybody to do everything they want. We may want to do that but we cannot pretend that everyone else, every third party is going to be happy with it and if they are not, you cannot beat BCA members with a stick for someone else's restriction. DR I see what you are getting at, I think part of the problem here is the use of the words restriction and discrimination together because I'm an advocate for access to be as free as possible as Convenor of the CRoW group. Equally, I have no problem whatsoever in accepting that there are certain caves where you do need restrictions and it is unavoidable. Free access to Otter Hole and Upper Flood Swallet and other caves we can think of, would he thought, be a great mistake. I think there are occasions where cavers would like to see certain restrictions and occasions where landowners impose restrictions over which we have no control over. He thought that if the term discrimination which has a particular legal force then comes to be used in that context. He personally will support this proposal and vote for it but that as it comes to be developed, perhaps the working group should bear in mind that avoiding that kind of conflict PB alluded to is highly desirable.

Proposal 3: Removal of Honorary Membership and Honorary President (Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

These roles serve no purpose (we have no honorary members, and the honorary president role is purely symbolic). The following constitutional changes should be made:

5.1d: Remove honorary membership (and update 'e' to remove mention of 'd')

5.6: Remove

6.15: Remove

8.12: Remove (a) as without honorary membership, there are no other memberships which are considered by an Annual General Meeting.

Chair introduced Proposal 3 and asked for questions.

GM It seems unfortunate that we should do this at a time when our Honorary President has just died. He knew it was a coincidence and could not have been foreseen but it throws up personally quite an awkward taste and secondly, this meeting should surely be electing a new President and what happens if that proposal fails and that position is left empty. An Honorary President is hardly something you can co-opt at the Council Meeting.

RN I personally viewed in the lens of retiring the role and thought this meeting would have been the perfect time. He couldn't think of anyone else other than Mick Day who had held the position for so long to replace him and he thought that opening that can of worms would be an absolute disaster and a fight between two bald men and a comb as we haven't needed the Honorary President for quite a while.

JP It occurs to me there are occasions when having a President may be useful. Honorary membership she wasn't bothered about but to say we have a President for the term of his residency they are considered to be an Honorary Member but we have no other honorary members other than that. It is simply that having a President with a high profile may on occasions be useful to BCA in consultations with various other bodies.

The Chair responded by asking what does the Chair's job do? Does not the Chair turn up and having an Honorary President then disrespect the Chair from an honorary position then the President is taking the higher rank than the Chair.

GM it's not quite that Phil, consider the difference between Bertie Aherne and Mary Robinson. Their roles are very high profile but very different within the concept of the Irish State. I can see similar things and agree with Jenny.

HJJ This actually is a proposal that I discussed with Matt on a few occasions and he felt very strongly about it. His view was very much that he did not want an Honorary President per se but if you look at the powers and the influence the Honorary President has under our Constitution then actually you have a very powerful and very very influential person in that position. Matt's concern was that should you end up with the wrong person in that position, you will regret voting him in. He wasn't against Honorary Presidents floating around in this or others but if you read the powers that person has got and the influence that can have, they are quite wide and that was Matt's concern.

The Chair echoed those concerns.

JP My view was that the position of Honorary President and Chairman should be complimentary. The Chairman is responsible for the running of the organisation and the view that it presents to the outside world but it could be extremely useful in certain circumstances if you had a President who could back up what the Chairman said and speak for the organisation in discussions with outside organisations. I don't see them as conflicting roles, I see them as complimentary roles but I do agree you need to be extremely careful who you chose as your President.

RN I think broadly the difference between a country like Ireland and the BCA is that we don't particularly have these ambassadorial functions and that actually the Chair should be doing these jobs and that we are doing is adding musical chairs to things. If we had an Honorary President and they took an active role and assumed the full powers we could get in the situation where we had two competing Chairs and it would tear the organisation apart. Just because we have had someone who hasn't done that doesn't mean we won't get someone who will. So it is perfectly reasonable to retire it and it is a fairly fitting legacy.

Proposal 4: Remove constitutional limitations on logo usage (Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

Delete constitution section 10.5.

This is outdated and unnecessarily restrictive. Suggest that the Manual of Operations can include a section on logo usage to better reflect current practice and to empower Council Officers to use appropriate judgement. This does not need to be a constitutional matter.

No questions on Proposal 4

Proposal 5: Constitutional changes to simplify acceptance of Group members (Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

Currently the constitution (section 5.2) enables our membership administrator to accept new Individual Members who are eligible, without input from BCA Council (thank goodness). New Group Members still need to be voted upon by Council. Providing that Group Member meets the eligibility criteria, it would be unprecedented, and also unacceptable, to reject them. Furthermore, as Group Members no longer have a vote at General Meetings there seems less need than ever before for Council to 'vet' them. I propose that new Group Members, as per Individual Members, should be accepted by the membership administrator providing they meet all acceptance criteria, thus avoiding delays in getting them joined and reducing bureaucracy.

Furthermore, the constitution does not need to say membership applications will involve an 'application form' (this is likely to be debatable wording if we move to automatic renewal/direct debit in future) and does not need to say the application should include the subscription fee, as this prevents electronic payment after the application has been accepted and constrains processes too much. Therefore, the current constitutional wording is likely to become defunct.

I propose section 5.2 of the constitution should be amended to read:

"All membership applications shall be made in accordance with current practices and be considered by a duly delegated person or persons agreed by National Council. This person or persons may accept membership on behalf of National Council providing eligibility criteria are met or they may defer to National Council for further consideration if they feel this necessary."

Concurrently, sections 5.3 and 5.4 and should be deleted, section 5.5 terminated after 'representation' and the final sentence of 9.1 deleted.

No questions for Proposal No 5

Proposal 6: Simplify constitutional processes and procedures for terms of office. (Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

Currently we have a tricky situation where each Officer 'role' has a three year term of office, but if the person elected to that role leaves and a replacement is elected, the replacement can only serve for the remaining term of the 'role'. This was intended to ensure approximately 1/3 of all Officer positions come up for election at each AGM (constitution section 6.1). However, this section of the constitution also says that each Officer (implying an individual) shall serve for three years, so there is a contradiction. At this AGM for example, the Treasurer position is up for election, even though our current Treasurer, Howard was only first elected last AGM. This is because he was only elected to finish the final year of a three-year term. Not only is this extremely confusing to keep track of (our current Secretary missed this), but it means not all Officers are elected on equal terms or office. I suggest that when a new individual is elected to a role, they serve for three years, and that it is the

Officer individual and not the 'role' that has a three-year term. **I propose that this is very easily achieved by deleting the final sentence of constitution section 6.1.**

Questions:

JP I think the original idea for this was extremely good. When the arrangement was set up originally it all worked very well and everyone knew where they were. It has got itself angled at the moment because of a series of resignations and the fact that we had a new Secretary and new Chairman who were not familiar with the systems. If you go back to the system and make it work properly, it is useful because the whole idea was that you didn't have a complete change of the Executive positions and officers all in one go. In effect, this is what you had last year and caused a terrific scramble for Russell and Phil to catch up. I would like to see the system continue but it does need to be worked properly and it is perfectly sensible that with a three year period it gave time to get the job done whereas just being elected for a one year term you might decide you have had enough. Given a three year term and if someone retires before the end of their three years, the person taking their place continues to the end of the three year term and is quite sensible. I think the original idea is sensible but it fell out of the system during all the changes and I would like to see it kept as it is sensible.

RN We have previously discussed this but the fact you write it down on paper doesn't really change anything. I guess that if people do it for a year and resign, we have to elect people to the remaining period but need to ensure we trigger an election. So it is very much in peoples favour as to how they view this. I don't think it is a major change to the organisation at all.

The Chair asked Dave Botcherby DB to speak on the subject as CHECC had considered the subject.

DB I did consider it and personally think it is a very good idea. Three years is enough time to get to grips with a role quite extensively and having to have experienced Executive members in place means that generally you don't have a complete loss of experience between the change over times. I think the main problem is people resigning from the roles and not the system itself. The reason it got so confusing is because of so many resignations which I think is a deeper problem than this. Practically it makes very little difference whether you have this in or not. If someone wants to serve for three years they can but I think the understanding bit is if you are standing up for a role it is for three years and is a commitment and something that is quite useful in gauging the kind of input you are going to need to give to a role.

Proposal 7: Removal of unnecessary wording from the constitution (Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

Sections 12.3 and 12.4; delete these. These kinds of wording have no place in a constitution.

Questions:

GM It took me a while to chase down the relevant clauses especially in the time a couple of days ago when the Constitution was off-line. These kinds of wording do have a place in the Constitution and you will find equivalent ones in for instance the memos and Rs of any company that you find yourself on the board of. The point about these clauses is to ensure that if the Council, the organisation says something, its members know where to find it and the second one puts the onus on the members to ensure their details as to how they are contacted and that is their responsibility. If you remove these clauses in their entirety and don't replace them with anything you will end up with all sorts of arguments as to yes we published it we put it in a publication which went out in Kyrgyzstan and was up to you to find it and not upto us to tell you where it is. This is why you will find them in company documents and things like that. They do have a role and hopefully you don't have to use them but id you need them, you got 'em.

RN This is very technical thing it is not just meeting the need for something like this. It is moving it from a Constitution to a Manual of Operations where if you ever need to change it, or you need to update it to different things, you can do easily without much grief.

The Chair responded maybe this is one we can leave or can vote on it that this is one we can pick up with the Working Group

Proposal 8: Consideration a new form of words for section 10.1 of the BCA constitution to be presented at BCA 2021 AGM (Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

Section 10 of the BCA constitution deals with 'limitations' and is outdated for a modernising national organisation. Section 10.1 states, "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." This wording requires reform.

Section 10.1 limits the effectiveness of the BCA as a national body in properly representing cavers. It can be used (and has been) to prevent the BCA investigating complaints, undertaking research into national policy issues and intervening in matters which are detrimental to the image of caving nationally. Even if BCA is funding a group or a scheme it cannot intervene unless invited to do so. This cannot be right. However, there is a value in member organisations having a degree of autonomy. Therefore a form of words are needed to maintain some member autonomy whilst allowing the BCA to properly act as a national body.

This motion instructs council to consider a new form of words for section 10.1 of the BCA constitution taking into account the above and to agree those words at council by majority vote in time to present them as a constitutional change to the 2021 BCA AGM.

Questions:

TA wanted to point out that this is actually a proposal from him TA and not one of Matt Ewles proposals. They were in a different order when submitted and he is responsible for this one.

The Chair pointed out that the proposals had been moved around to group them together so they were related in the Agenda.

PB Commented I think this proposal needs to address the issue of vexatious claims being made against members because it doesn't. Nowadays we can't assume that everyone acts with the best of intentions. It is sad but true, there has to be a safeguard there against people being dragged through the mire for purely vexatious reasons.

Chair – vexatious what does that mean?

PB It means you are doing it to cause mischief, there is no legal or valid reason to make the complaint and it is purely because you want to cause trouble.

Chair I would hope our members don't do that and strongly advise that they do not do this. It is not good on your character.

PB It needs to be in writing I think Phil.

RN That is an absolutely staggering statement. If anyone raises a complaint about any issue of discrimination you should go through the motions of at least exploring it. This is a really serious thing and you should not raise the barrier of entry just because a complaint may be spurious, that's fine.

What we should do is have an appropriate complaints procedure where you go through it, establish that complaint isn't worth while, it doesn't need to be taken to Council. Now there is a complaints procedure, which has been written and has been used and so you need to update the Manual of Operations. I see no problem with this and this one is an issue because this one bars the BCA from intervening in anything so if you had a caving club that wants to ban members of an ethnic minority. This could be used against the BCA to say well actually that member is no longer a member and so the only way you can interfere is to write to you asking you so even if the member wrote to us asking us so, well the ex-member. It's just absolutely staggering, why would be put in that position and I know this is just a smokescreen over issues with Charterhouse and I have no wish to continue that absolute farce, we went, I know Phil you don't want to re-open these wounds and I have no intention of doing so but at the minute, the reason there was a farce about that is because we have that current clause in. I tried to raise issues and say look we need to avoid the catastrophic end point and then everyone bit my head off. It's just, you know you try and actually look forward with a plan and it doesn't work.

The Chair – Will

Will Burn WB Members have rights when they join the BCA, you know they have rights to insurance and present themselves as a BCA member and other types of membership have rights to present themselves as representing cavers as well as the BCA. Those rights come with responsibilities to the membership which has given them those benefits. So one of those responsibilities is transparency and there are plenty of other responsibilities that come with that and the BCA needs to be empowered to act on behalf of its membership in ensuring that basically every member of the BCA meets a very very and it's pretty minimum not banning black people from caves, very very minimum standards. The BCA needs to be empowered in that way.

PB First of all I haven't even thought of Charterhouse, I was thinking of more local issues in the South East where potentially we could be dragged before the BCA for something we haven't done. I can't give specifics because there aren't. It is something we are conscious of that could potentially happen. So please don't keep thinking I'm doing Charterhouse support work, I'm not. I'm here as an individual with my own experience, I'm nothing to do with Charterhouse.

GM I'm very very sorry that this has been raised at this meeting but can I put it on record as the Company Secretary for the Charterhouse Caving Company Ltd that I am absolutely appalled that this matter has been dragged in front of this Council at this point and I think it should be expunged from the minutes if that is at all possible. Thankyou.

Chair – let's leave the previous disputes of Charterhouse out of this and concentrate on the motions. Move on to the last proposals 9 and 10.

b) Membership

Proposal 9: Total overhaul of BCA membership (Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

Since the start, the BCA has had Group Members and Individual Members, with two classes of Individual Members depending on whether individuals source their BCA membership via their club or directly (CIMs vs DIMs). Most of our Individual Members are members of clubs, and therefore choose to get their BCA membership as a CIM. The concept here is fine, but this means that these members have no direct interaction with the BCA. This creates GDPR challenges, because it means BCA hold data on members with no way of ensuring that data was given to us with proper consent. These issues did not exist when the BCA was founded in 2004. This is also the reason BCA still do not hold email

addresses for >2000 of their Individual Members (which is becoming a bigger issue with each passing year), and also why so many cavers don't even know they are BCA members.

If the BCA were set up from scratch, there would certainly only be Direct Individual Membership. The concept of having a second class of Individual Membership which is administered via a third-party organisation (i.e. a club) would seem an unusual choice by today's standards.

Current BCA infrastructure would not allow CIM membership to be abolished. The administrative burden on the Membership Administrator using current antiquated databases and systems would be huge. Cavers nationally would have to join the BCA themselves, rather than their club doing all the work; so that joining process would need addressing to make this a palatable process. Furthermore, as it is currently a requirement of Group Membership that all members of that group be Individual BCA members; this would be harder to verify if all BCA members joined directly rather than the majority through the club.

It seems likely that the necessary progression towards a more modern membership system is always going to be hampered by the above issues. Therefore, it is about time that the BCA started looking into addressing these issues by undertaking a complete overhaul of its membership systems, to create a situation where scrapping of CIM membership becomes viable.

This will require a total overhaul of BCA's membership systems to make them very easy to use (e.g. simple online forms and electronic payment options), with the option for automatic renewal and direct debit so members do not, if they choose, have to go through the process every year other than perhaps an annual reverification of details and any necessary GDPR compliance steps.

The membership database would need to be a live document linked directly to the membership and payment processes, so that the system is automated and most membership renewals do not require input from the Membership Administrator. Furthermore, such a system could automatically check Group Membership applications to verify everyone in that club is an Individual Member and flag any who are not. Finally, there would need to be a member login section, ideally built into the website, where members can update their details and preferences and changes are made to the membership database automatically without manual intervention. Such a member interaction interface could also be used to facilitate member ballots after each AGM.

Note that these are the exact systems Gary Douthwaite was planning to develop until he and our Secretary were hounded out of their positions.

Finally, the sending out of physical membership cards would have to stop if all Individual Members joined directly to avoid a significant workload and cost of posting these out (currently they get bulk posted to club Secretaries). They could be replaced with an automatically generated membership confirmation certificate which can be emailed out (again, automatically) when payment is made, or available to download when a member logs into the website. Anyway, in this day of reducing plastic waste, I can't think of anything better than abolishing 6500 plastic cards each year!

I propose that BCA Council start work so that the BCA's membership systems and infrastructure are overhauled by the time of the 2022 Annual General Meeting, such that discontinuation of the CIM membership category, if desired, would not present any significant issues.

This work will need to ensure the above challenges are addressed and that the appropriate systems are implemented along the lines of the suggestions above. It is understood that this may require significant investment in membership software or electronic payment systems, and maybe even employment or contracting of the services of an IT professional, if enough voluntary resource with adequate skills to make this happen cannot be found. Use of off-the-shelf systems can be considered but paying for development of bespoke systems should also be an option.

The BCA has the money to invest in such things if necessary; we are quite unique for an organisation of our size to have so few paid roles or services.

This proposal is not to scrap CIM Membership; but simply to get the BCA into a position where it could scrap CIM Membership without negative consequences (a position that would undoubtedly benefit the BCA regardless of whether a decision is then taken to actually scrap CIM membership... having more modern membership systems would be a benefit regardless).

A plan for how this is to be implemented should be presented to the 2021 AGM for approval and the changes implemented by the 2022 AGM.

The Chair referred to Proposal 9 being similar to Proposal 10 talking about the removal of a Class because of its redundancy so we can take the two similarly with questions because they are interrelated.

TA Questioned if we had missed Proposal No 8 . Chair referred back to No 8

Proposal 10: Simplification of the BCA membership (Proposed: Rostam Namaghi , Seconded: Will Burn)

Proposal to simplify the BCA membership by eliminating the two class membership structure (Direct and Club), with everyone just becoming a 'member of the BCA'.

This is being proposed as they have been fixed at one price and would make both database administration easier and allow us to contact our members directly rather than put the unnecessary workload on club secretaries.

The Chair proposals 9 and 10 are very similar and talk about membership of CIMs and DIMs and whilst they are different they are technically quite close so he thought they were worth discussing as a group and asked for questions.

Dave Rose DR I want to put in a strong request here that as the Working Group studies this proposal it does pay particular attention to these GDPR issues . I've been editor of the Newsletter for about 3 years and we are still in this extraordinary position where over 90% of the BCA membership as individual people don't get a Newsletter by email because of the way that this whole complicated situation works out with GDPR an so if you are a member through a Club rather than a direct member, you have to opt in to receive the Newsletter as you then join an organisation and object to receiving news about what it does . This whole idea is bonkers and the truth is that sometimes quite a lot of people will read the Newsletter via the Website but it is still only a minority . So now I and Pete Glanville who has very kindly agreed to take on the layout as previously done by Matt and Gary putting quite a bit of time in this and people put time into this writing articles , we get photos together and then still if we get a good issue, the Website take up may be at best a quarter or a third of the membership will actually look at it, So this is something I do ask particularly gets addressed so that you know, it becomes part of BCA membership and get the Newsletter by email.

The Chair spoke about Proposal 10. What we are finding with the new database, because we have CIMs and DIMs at effectively the same price makes then a redundant category within our system. This is why Proposal 10 is saying to be a member of BCA . The difference between 9 and 10 is not changing the way we are going to administer BCA membership. Members will still be allowed to join BCA through their Clubs. What BCA need to do is ensure our Clubs are providing that information, the

contact information within GDPR to us so we then can contact our members and ensure eg it is ridiculous that we cannot send theoretically our members a newsletter or information about the AGM. So this is what Proposal 10 is trying to do. I believe and we can ask Tim as his is slightly more radical and we are looking in his proposal to try and ensure that members join individually to the BCA. So they go directly and in that way our membership can join individually. Tim –

TA this was one of Matt Ewles proposals, obviously he was at the heart of membership issues and his rather lengthy explanation of the proposals sets out the problems he faced as Secretary. I think that having read the two of them, there is quite a difference between the proposals. No 10 seems to be quite simply just a renaming proposal but No 9 is looking at in some detail and quite transparently the real problems with the current membership structure that do need to be addressed. I do appreciate that the Chair, Ari, Russell and others are looking for a solution to this issue. I can't see that just renaming the membership types is actually a long term solution to the issue. So I know you did ask if I wanted to withdraw that proposal but I think if nothing else it is well worthy of leaving on the agenda as we have done as a point of discussion and to flag up some of the actual issues behind the actual named membership categories.

JP two points, first of all, I am currently a member of two clubs. One of them I have just discovered on principle doesn't send its members email addresses to BCA. I have only just discovered this. The other club I am a member of also involved in sorting out membership subscriptions and one of things we do as part of sorting out membership subscriptions is to get members to confirm every year that they wish their email addresses be forwarded to BCA. So part of this is to do with the Clubs. The second thing is that it is important for club secretaries, where they have members who have to be members of BCA in order for the club insurance and member to member protection to work, they must be sure that all of their members are also members of BCA so there has to be a club involvement and I can't see how you can remove that unless you can be sure of a way of ensuring that all club members apply for BCA individual membership and you then leave the club with the position of having to remove members from its list who haven't applied to BCA. So it seems much more sensible having dealt with this with a club treasurer and being involved in it heavily in a fairly large club, that actually if a club secretary gets on it with it and the system in the club works then there isn't a problem. It's simply that some clubs have a different view on this and refuse to engage with this. If the club engages with this there shouldn't be a problem.

GM I see this, I agree with everything Jenny has just said and I see this as a barrier to membership and a barrier to caving. Every year at this time of year all the university clubs, the college clubs recruit new members. These members are completely new to caving, they don't even know what BCA is. Hopefully by the end of their first year they do know and they understand the system and are well on board with it. I am recruiting people at the moment. If those people do not know that BCA exists and will not join BCA because that's an additional hoop to jump through. They may well just simply not go caving at all. We need to bring these people on board through the club and then by the end of the period with us they actually know what's going on. They understand and are happy with the fact that their information is being sent through to BCA on an annual basis. I do this every time I sign up a new member. I email them, I give them the GDPR stuff and I explain to them that their information will be forwarded to BCA. This happens on a regular basis with me but if I'm not doing that, those people will not join BCA and if those people will not join BCA, what do I do? Do I throw them out of the club? I'm sure that Bristol University Students Union will be very unhappy if I hadn't signed that student up.

DB I think firstly addressing that point, I am not convinced that individually signing up to BCA is any more or less hassle than through the club. You still have to send in the details and I think that part of the reason why this is quite timely is because it is easier than ever to do this type of subscription and this works over student clubs which have an extension not to get BCA membership until the new year. This is plenty of time to educate students about what the BCA is and why they need new membership. I think that precisely what Jenny was talking about where some clubs don't bother to send this information is why it needs to change because most members wouldn't mind sending out their email address even if the clubs don't have them or want forward them on. It's the equivalent in the modern day of providing your address to an organisation. I think a simple on-line system would be much easier than what we have currently and a portal for club secretaries to check numbers if required of individual members, would solve this with a modern solution.

AC-P I don't see this proposal being one that enforces individual cavers to apply to join the BCA. This proposal gets members to a point where they log-in and update their details where we guarantee we have that email address or email address. We have clubs who give their address or email address but the members address so we don't have anyway of contacting the members. So this proposal is just saying lets get our membership system to a point where somehow CIM membership could be scrapped. I think in that regard it is more useful than renaming the membership, all it is saying is let's get our system changed so we are able to do these things. We are very far with progress already. We are not going to be asking this year, we are not going to be asking with the systems we are planning for members to join the BCA with their clubs. They will be able to log-in on- line , change their newsletter subscription, update their confidential information , that is how I see this proposal.

The Chair responded I would just say on the clubs that refuse to give us information, maybe the BCA should be taking a stance that if you want to be part of the BCA, unfortunately these are the rules that you need to take and we as BCA need to contact our members because to take part in BCA activities and insurance etc etc these are the conditions you need to agree to when you join the BCA.

RN You can vote for both proposals because the two don't exclude one another , I thought I would emphasise that. I didn't think I would agree with this but I actually agree with Graham in that what I think we need to do is try and make as little barrier to entry so if anyone can achieve everything in one sign up, that's the important point. The main difference between the two proposals is that yeah it might look like at cosmetic renaming but it's about not carrying on the old style of membership system where we wrote to a club secretary and gave out all that sort of thing and so our new database is not dictated by old names that we've clung on to because it was hard to change it. I don't see why we can't do the change in the database with such a prescribed proposal . I don't see how it necessarily helps in that everything in there we can do without having a vote on it is my main point.

DR In some ways this is the most important of all the proposals and it is especially important now I think because of the details which need to be sorted but here we are as you Phil have rightly said in this ongoing crisis with apart from all the other things going on with it, clearly caving is in a difficult place and will be for some time. It's clear also the BCA might have a very positive role to play in getting caving going again and revitalising the sport after Covid and you know you and I have discussed it privately and you have a lot of extremely good ideas for making that happen and getting the BCA at the heart of that. But communication clearly and quickly and openly between the Association and its members is key to this and so the one thing I am concerned about in Proposal No 9 is the time frame

for how this should be implemented to be presented to the 2021 AGM and implemented by 2022. I personally think that this is so important we should bring this forward possibly to the extent of having an emergency general meeting in a few months' time with a view to all of it being implemented at the latest by the next AGM because I don't think we have any time to waste and I don't know if you have thought about actually doing it in that but you know heads do need to be put together to work out the exact details but it can't be that difficult I would have thought.

Phil I'm going to go to PB and then RS and then we are going to close this discussion. RN –Phil sorry to interrupt , one thing we are going to do is put in a technical notice which should come through about GDPR. It was something me and AMcL were talking about and so I think that technical intervention is what is needed not policy intervention. That was all I was going to say but as it stands.

PB First of all the issue of GDPR raised is manageable surely as all members should be advised to visit their profile on the BCA site and manage it themselves and determine what BCA should know or not know. Second please listen to the podcast . I learnt a lot about these two proposals doing that yesterday and thirdly how many of you have joined the AA through your bank. It is no different really.

RS I general support this proposal to overhaul the membership systems, they do need doing. The one thing I would point is that having done the club return for several years to BCA , I didn't find it onerous really and it gave a certainty that all our members were insured and we even moved our membership to June July so that we were sure we got the payment to pay BCA. So just be careful about charging down a road thinking we are saving the club secretaries a lot of work when you are doing is giving Club members who are less interested in maintaining their database entries because I hate to say it but we have a database of our members and I don't think they update the detail because they think it is up to the club secretary to do. If you want to save plastic the National Trust have gone to paper cards, quite robust but they won't clean your windscreen in winter but they won't survive a washing machine either so perhaps that is one thing to look at. Thankyou.

Chair – I'm going to bring in Wayne.

WS Basically I feel the membership system does need overhauling and I know it is in hand from what I have heard. I had to do the membership when I was secretary of TSG for insurance for TSG and agrees with RS that if the club secretary didn't do it some of our members wouldn't bother doing it so I agree with what RS is saying.

Chair – asked IT Convenor to explain the electronic ballot.

AC-D BCA members will receive an email with their ballot voting ID which they should receive before midnight tonight which is when the ballot opens. The ballot will be open on line and the link to that voting platform will be in the voting ID . It is a straightforward process, place your voting ID in , prove you are not a robot , click next and show what your votes are. You can confirm them and then submit it. It should be really straightforward . You will be shown a voting receipt at the end so that you can confirm your vote for the election and you will be shown that voting receipt at the end . It is completely anonymous and we will be able to show the results at the end of October and we'll show the results shortly afterwards. If you have any questions that we can answer there is an email address to the returning officer at BritishCaving.org.uk which you will also have in your email and all the information as well.

Chair – moving on

c) Voting

Proposal 12: The BCA National Council shall specify named individuals responsible for running any ballot required by the Constitution (**Proposed: CSCC**)

Proposal: Add to the BCA Constitution: 8.15 The BCA National Council shall specify named individuals responsible for running any ballot required by the Constitution. Those individuals shall not be BCA Council members. Reason: Any ballots run by the BCA need to be beyond criticism. As such, no Council member should be involved in the running the ballot. I.e. neither the distribution nor collection of ballot papers nor the counting of votes. The ballot would be run by trusted individuals appointed by Council but who are not members of Council.

Proposal 13: Voting Proposal for the AGM (**Proposed: Rostam Namaghi , Seconded: Phil Rowsell**)

Proposal: I would like to propose that the BCA clarifies its voting system for elections. This only requires changes to the manual of operations and does not need constitutional amendments. Though this can be done at a council meeting, it is important that we establish a precedent that voting systems should only be altered at general meetings.

1. Plurality Voting: Members have one vote which they can allocate to one candidate, and the candidate with the largest number of votes wins.

It requires the following changes (highlighted in bold) to the manual of operations: *'For contested positions or multi-choice option motions, the candidate or option with the most support will be **elected/accepted**. For candidate elections each member can cast one vote for their preferred candidate. For multiple vacancies of the same position the candidates with the largest shares of the vote are elected.'*

Proposal 14: Election Statements: clear light touch regulation of statements (**Proposed: Rostam Namaghi , Seconded: Phil Rowsell**)

Candidates are afforded the opportunity to include a statement. I would suggest that these statements be on the website rather than the voting portal, and that the Secretary or Chair be responsible for moderating them. This is to be a very light touch affair as detailed in the proposed change to the MoO below (to be included immediately after the reference to the statement):

'Statements are to be moderated by the Secretary/Chair or nominated third party (but not for their own position, or a position they are running for) and only on the grounds of public decency, defamation, relevance or falsehood.'

This is only included as currently there is nothing to stop someone contesting the position and using it as a free advert to our members, a platform to slander people or simply list every profanity in the dictionary.

Proposal 15: Uncontested Elections: Allow opposition to unfavourable candidates by reopening nominations. (**Proposed:** Rostam Namaghi , **Seconded:** Will Burn)

The constitution states that 'uncontested candidates' for Council position 'will be elected'. This wording was based on the pre-2019 status quo of appointing unopposed candidates without a vote. This should therefore be the default interpretation.

AGM's are the final arbiter of the constitution and at the 2019 AGM the will of the AGM was to require election of all candidates. Therefore, this is the last interpretation and action would be required to change it back to the 'status quo'. For the sake of procedural speed at meetings I propose that this be amended to:

'The constitution states that 'uncontested candidates' for Council position 'will be elected'. They will be elected by default unless an objection at an AGM requires a vote be held. The options will be For/Against/Abstain – if the candidate is not elected, the post is reopened for nominations and vote to occur at a later date.'

I would recommend voting on the 'uncontested candidates' proposal as it does not reflect the will of the last AGM and would require a motion at an AGM to implement. Therefore it is easier to modify it to the current position.

d) Other

Proposal 16: All software whether bespoke or purchased commercially is properly licensed and registered to the British Caving Association (**Proposed:** CSCC)

Proposal: That the BCA National Council be instructed to ensure that all software whether bespoke or purchased commercially is properly licensed and registered to the British Caving Association. Reason: There is a concern is that in the absence of a license that BCA could lose the right to use particular software possibly at short notice. This is particularly important with the mission critical software. It is likely to be costly and difficult, if not impossible, to replace at short notice.

Proposal 17: BCA National Council produces an appropriate Social Media Policy (**Proposed:** CSCC)

Proposal: That the BCA National Council produces an appropriate Social Media Policy. To be completed by the 2021 AGM. Reason: That in this age of increasing use of social media, BCA has an active Facebook page, it is increasingly important that the association has a social media policy. The policy should help to protect BCA's reputation and give clear guidance to its volunteers and staff. critical software. It is likely to be costly and difficult, if not impossible, to replace at short notice.

Proposal 18: Social media policy (**Proposed:** Tim Allen, **Seconded:** Jane Allen)

Should BCA develop a social media policy it shall have transparency and communication to cavers at its heart. It should not be designed to prevent council members from speaking out, nor should it limit in anyway the ability of council representatives to communicate with their own organisations and members.

(9) Appointment of 'suitably qualified person' to certify BCA accounts

Agenda item required in accordance with section 9.7 of the constitution.

HJJ Thanks Phil, the normal process is the Treasurer produces a set of accounts and they are independently examined, they go to Council for discussion and they go to the AGM for approval. So in 2020 I prepared them and they were independently examined and then we were all locked down and I discussed with the Executive that if the AGM was later on in the year, which it currently is and we haven't approved the accounts, then we would miss the HMRC tax reporting deadline which is something to avoid at all costs. The Executive in April decided to accept and ratify the accounts which enabled him to report to HMRC in a timely manner. The accounts were posted to Council back in April. They have been on the BCA website and ratified by the Executive in April so we are asking you to note the accounts this year and hopefully if business returns to normal next year, the AGM will be ratifying them as normal.

(10) Any other business

Chair - moving to AOB and one item brought up by Nigel about the Training Officer and he has a question to the AGM in two parts:

1. When can an Officer's role be changed and who does this? Council meeting ?
2. If the Officer is in place when the changes are made are they involved in the changes?

I'm going to call on Rostam, one of our Constitutional, I'm going to say experts but possibly to inform and say what his advice on the situation is.

RN There are a couple of things in the Constitution that say there has to be this officer and gives a very generic scope of their role but the exact terms of reference is adopted at a Council Meeting. It would be unusual to not involve the person you were talking about if they had issues with their terms of reference so it can be updated.

Phil – Nige

NA Yes that's fine

RN Phil, one question I missed the opportunity to bring it up in the minutes – does P&I?

Chair – hang on let's ask if there are any other questions trying to finish off Nigel's AOB. Dave is this about Nigel's AOB?

DR I just wanted to give a short update on what is happening about CRoW

Chair let's park that and are there any other comments on Nigel's question about the changes of roles? No, then I will go to Rostam's question.

RN Yes it was just to ask if the minutes were changed in a way that P&I had a vote as at the last AGM as I remember that the wording being vague and I didn't see the minutes so I couldn't vote to approve them and ask questions.

Chair I'm going to have to pass on this because I can't say I have read them religiously so could propose that we move this to the next Council meeting to decide.

RN Yes I guess so.

Chair can I ask for a proposer and a second to do that as it may be a better way and the AGM can agree that the Council Meeting will do this. Russell are you proposing it?

RM – yes

RN there is one issue with that Phil, sorry because it was done at an AGM you can't undo policy set at an AGM unless you are at an AGM.

Chair are we not doing that now to say the AGM is giving us authority to do that and decide at Council.

RN Yes sorry I misunderstood the proposal.

Chair that's OK so what we are proposing is that we take this inconsistency potentially in the minutes and take it to the next Council Meeting and the membership is happy that the Council will decide to clear up this point. So Russell has proposed that and Jenny is seconding that. Any votes against. I can't see any votes against. Any abstentions?

AC-D we could poll this Phil as well .

Chair We could do it just as easy like this (hand raised) is it not? Any against – no. Any abstentions Chair abstained Rostam because he is in the post and should abstain. So there is one abstention and everyone else is happy for Council to do that. So Dave

DR just to give everyone an update on the CRoW case. So Tuesday we are in Court in Cardiff unfortunately in a remote hearing as Cardiff is back in largely lock down. This is to renew our application orally in front of a judge to argue that we do have a case that caving is not part of the CRoW Act and is judicially reviewable and therefore the decision to exclude the Cambrian Caving Council Access Officer from the meetings of the Welsh Government's Access Reform Group was unlawful and this has national applicability as you can see from my report to the AGM. Our Barrister has filed what I think is an absolutely superb skeleton argument setting out our position why the previous Judge got it wrong. I don't know if we will get a decision on Tuesday. My hunch is it won't be that quick but what I will do is write a short report at the hearing and I'll stick it on the BCA website and then as soon as we have a decision I'll circulate the Council and again I'll write a short report to put on the Website so that members know where we are with this. Clearly if we win we move to a full hearing and it's all systems go. If we lose, as my report makes clear, this may be the end of the road. Anyhow I will let people know where we are as soon as I can.

Chair it won't just go the BCA Website, we'll put it out through social media. I have one question, do you think it is of value people joining the Zoom hearing or not?

DR It won't make any difference to the Court as it is in open Court. If it was taking place in an actual Court House anyone could turn up and listen, there would be a public gallery so essentially what you are doing here is sitting in the public gallery remotely. If anybody is interested they are absolutely free to do so and if you have the link can send it out so that anybody who wants to can attend. That would be great yeah.

Chair I don't think we have any other business so just before I close the meeting I'm going to plug again please ask all those candidates questions. They are standing for a position on BCA Council and we want to ensure that people are keen to do that. So ask them questions, quiz them before you make a decision. It would be great if we get a good mandate. If you don't like us please vote against us. On the proposals, please listen to Rostam's podcast because it is very informative. It starts by questioning things and asking questions. We will try and get some debate going in the various platforms so please take active role in that and then Ari will be sending you a voting email soon showing you how to email. Please, this is a big plea for our whole membership who are listening on livestream and to all us who can con everyone into getting involved in our membership and please do vote. With that I would like to close our AGM and thank you all for taking part. It has been a pretty good AGM and can close now after two and half hours where I think we have done very well. Thank you.