



Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 7th January 2012 at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch

Present:

Paul Ibberson (PI)	BCA Treasurer
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Nick Williams (NW)	BCA Insurance Manager / Equipment & Techniques Officer
Nigel Ball (NB)	BCA Acting Training Officer
Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer / Webmaster
Dave Checkley (DCh)	BCRA Chairman
Glenn Jones (GJ)	BCA Membership Administrator / CNCC Rep.
Jenny Potts (JP)	BCA Publication Sales / DCA Rep.
Mike Clayton (MC)	BCA Newsletter Editor
Bob Mehew (BM)	BCA Rope-Test Officer
David Cooke (DC)	BCA Cave-Registry Co-ordinator
James Collings (JC)	BCA Youth & Development Officer
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Member Rep.
Owen Clarke (OC)	Club Member Rep.
Emma Porter (EP)	Club Member Rep. / BCRC Rep.
Mick Day (MD)	Individual Member Rep. / President
Faye Litherland (FL)	Individual Member Rep.
Mike McCombe (MM)	Cambrian CC Rep.
Idris Williams (IW)	ASCT Rep.
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Rep.
Helen Brook (HB)	CHECC Rep.
Lee Paskin (LP)	ACI Rep.
Ian Peachey (IP)	Observer
Chris Gibbs (CG)	Observer

The meeting commenced at 10:38am.

1. Chairman's Welcome

As agreed at the 2011 AGM, in Andy Eavis's absence MD took the Chair and welcomed Council members.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Andy Eavis, Ged Campion, Stephan Natynczuk, Clark Friend, Alan Finch, Chris Jewell, David Jean, Bernie Woodley and Mark Williams.

3. Applications for Club Membership

GJ reported an application with the correct paperwork and payment from the "Hainslack Caving Club" and the "Cleveland Mining History Society".

Proposal: *to accept the "Hainslack Caving Club" and the "Cleveland Mining History Society" as Member Clubs.*

Prop: GJ, Sec: BP *agreed unanimously*

4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 15th October 2011 (previously circulated)

DW: On p. 5 "slale-oil" should read "shale-oil". On p.8 the line from PI that says "This year the claim is for the full cost of £300." should read "[...] for the full cost of £380.29." There are also three Action 80s, but only one of these has made its way to the final Action Log. Suggest these are renamed as 80a, 80b and 80c.

Proposal: *to accept the amended Minutes from 15th October 2011 as a true record*

Prop: JP, Sec: DCh *agreed unanimously*

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

Review of Action Log

Action Log 6 (*Bank Mandates*): Ongoing - see Treasurer's Report.

Action Log 36 (*Manual of Operations*): Ongoing – see Secretary's Report.

Action Log 54 (*Liaise with SUI*): Ongoing. NW is waiting for an opportunity to arrange a face-to-face meeting.

Action Log 74 (*IT Services Group*):

DC: DC presented a document (appendix 1) that has arisen out of a meeting about the Group. The document proposes setting up an IT Working Party.

LW: As the Party is about expertise rather than voting members, it was felt that a Working Party would be a better approach than a Standing Committee.

MD: Could it be a sub-Committee of the P&I Committee?

LW: The role of the IT Committee is very broad, potentially involving a number of Standing Committees as well as many of the other aspects of BCA's operations. Therefore it is felt it would be better if it were separate.

GJ: Is the opening introduction to the tabled document simply an overview, or is it describing what the Working Party will be doing?

DC: Would envisage the Party ultimately working towards a "cloud" model with everything available via the internet. This would allow access by multiple officers.

NW: That is not the purpose of the Working Party. The purpose is to consider these things but there are a number of important principles, such as the Data Protection Act and the need to keep things backed up, that are a much higher priority. This is really about a group of people getting together and doing some forward thinking that is beyond Council.

GJ: The last sentence of the 2nd paragraph is true but is this an absolute requirement?

MD: It is a description of the situation rather than recommendation for a solution.

PI: As a newcomer there appear to be lots of small isolated islands and we could do with rationalising it.

BM: Is this Working Party effectively going to operate forever?

LW: Thinks it should. As long as technology is changing, we need to keep on top of it.

MD: Any subsequent meeting can consider altering its role in the future.

BM: If it's to be long-term, surely that suggests it should be more democratic than a Working Party.

DW: The intention is to set up the Working Party initially to analyse the potential needs. Should it be felt in the future, as a result of some of this work, that this needs to have an overarching role, then the structure could be altered.

Proposal: ***That a Working Party be established with the following remit:***

- ***to manage and coordinate BCA's IT infrastructure.***
- ***to commission and implement IT projects as deemed desirable for BCA.***
- ***to provide a resource of expertise available to BCA.***

Prop: NW Sec: DJu *agreed unanimously*

BM: Suggests that the Manual of Operations needs to consider formally reviewing the remit of Working Parties annually.

Action 88: DW to update Working Parties section of the draft Manual of Operations following the creation of an IT Working Party and to consider including a formal annual review of a Working Party's remit.

Proposal: ***That DC be the IT Working-Group Convenor***

Prop: DW Sec: DJu - *There being no other nomination, DC was elected unopposed.*

Action Log 79 (*BCA Approved-Provider Logo*): Ongoing

Action Log 80a (*Write to CSCC about Approval Process*): DW – Apologies that this was not done, but it was missing from Action Log. DW will do it this week.

Action Log 80b (*Written specification for Training Database*): Ongoing – see Acting Training Officer's Report

Action Log 80c (*Weather & Flooding Document*): Complete – see Secretary's Report.

Action Log 81 (*E-mail Expenses Forms Link*): Complete

Action Log 82 (*List of Equipment for Asset Register*): Ongoing – see Treasurer's Report

Action Log 83 (*Produce Asset Register*): Ongoing

Action Log 84 (*Speleology Funding*): Ongoing – see Treasurer’s Report

Action Log 85 (*Liaise with Tony Waltham re: Shale-Gas*): Complete DW: GC has reported that Tony Waltham says we have nothing to worry about.

Action Log 86 (*Ways to Back up Media-Liaison Role*): Ongoing

Action Log 87 (*Liaise with PI about Future Library Funding*): Completed – see Treasurer’s Report

Officers’ Reports

6. Chairman’s Report (*written report previously circulated*)

The Chairman’s Report was accepted unanimously

7. Secretary’s Report (*written report previously circulated*)

Manual of Operations

DW: There are some contentious issues being raised today. Following consultation outside of meetings, DW feels we need to now have the discussion around the table. There is not necessarily any need for us to come to a definitive decision now, as ultimately the decision is for the AGM in June. However it would be useful to hear people’s views so that, if necessary, alternative proposals can be tabled at the AGM.

Section 1 Standing Committees

Section 1.1, 1.2 & 1.7 – Membership & Voting

LW: Under these proposals it is unlikely that the P&I Committee would have anyone voting other than the Chairman’s casting vote. This would be quite difficult.

DJu: What about asking each Committee to come forward with its own proposals?

BM: Several regions have never sent reps to the Training Committee. The voting procedure we adopt depends on whether the Standing Committees are there to represent the Regions and Bodies, or whether they should be technical groups. BM feels DC’s proposal will stifle debate.

FL: Is concerned with the current status-quo in that, in a vote on a non-technical issue, the voices of the Regions and the Constituent Bodies can currently be drowned out by technical experts. Maybe two separate votes are needed – a vote that just concerns the RCCs and CBs, and a vote on technical issues.

NW: There are two votes currently - that is what Council is for. NW doesn’t actually see either of the proposals removing the possibility of a dispute taking place. In fact the criticism that NW would make about the recent E&T difficulty was that Council should have acted sooner. NW believes Council should get better at making difficult decisions. From E&T’s point of view the proposed voting structure will make life difficult. An example is the recent discussion that was had about the Chinese Anchors. The discussions were technical and finely balanced. If everyone around the table has a vote, then it is much better. With technical issues, there is not usually a clear-cut answer and you are always balancing risks. The vote is then necessarily based on political decisions.

BM: E&T had this debate about 3 years ago and decided that all installers should have their SRT competence pre-checked. This was accepted with lots of RCCs present. At Council this was then overturned by the RCC reps.

JP: Is in favour of experts being co-opted and they should be allowed to vote. Would like to see that any Standing Committee informs Council if it co-opts someone because of their expertise.

FL: If we maintain a status-quo, then maybe we need something in the Manual of Operations about how to elevate an issue to Council. Recently something that was elevated to Council was kicked back to E&T. Had Council dealt with it then and there, the whole issue could have been solved ages ago.

LW: Are all of Standing Committees’ decisions necessarily ratified by Council?

NW: No. By definition some things are urgent.

JP: Should these not be agreed by the Executive?

FL: In such a case it should be by a unanimous vote.

JP: Can’t think of anything that would require an instant reaction except safety.

NW: In general we have to be very careful to avoid over-specifying things.

DC: Agrees with NW about everyone needing a vote. DC would like a means to protect Regions and RCCs and feels a veto is the solution, as detailed in the attached Reports. In the specific instance of E&T recently, CSCC couldn’t operate under the new scheme so had no option but to withdraw. Had there been the option of asking for a temporary veto, then the new policy that they couldn’t operate under would not have come into force. This would not then have automatically forced their withdrawal.

SH: There is nothing unusual in what we are discussing; it is normal procedure in Organisations. Committees do need to make decisions but at the same time this is the parent body and we can overturn decisions. There are means to

call Special meetings. Nobody has really argued against specialists having a vote. The mechanisms exist to pursue an issue if anyone feels strongly enough.

BM: If the veto is used early on in a debate, then it stifles discussion. We should also give some thought to Working Parties. Do we need to extend the Manual of Operations section on Working Parties?

NW: We are proposing a hugely complex structure here.

FL: What happens if something is safety critical, but someone has a good reason why an action should not be taken? The action is then implemented before the concern can be taken to Council.

HB: We seem to be discussing giving a veto to Regions. If the concern is about a safety-critical issue, then surely it should be the technical experts who have the veto, rather than the Regions and Constituent Bodies.

BM: If it is a technical issue, then it is important for that individual to make their case as clearly as they can. They are then absolving themselves from blame later on. There is legal precedent for this.

JP: Suggests simply removing the second paragraph of 1.7.

NW: Having General Principles in other areas of the Manual of Operations is an excellent idea. Maybe this should be carried across to the Standing Committee section too. It is probably also worth specifying that a casting vote by the Chair would usually be in favour of a status quo.

Action 89: DW to continue to consult on voting in Standing Committees and redraft existing proposals to better reflect the views of Council.

Section 1.8 & 1.9

NW: Feels it is unnecessary to run the draft minutes past a two other members of the Committee before publication.

DW: This was included to minimise the chance of significant errors appearing in the Draft Minutes. It is paralleled by the proposals for Council Minutes.

Section 3 Executive

FL: Should we not expect Executive decisions to be made unanimously?

BM: In a situation where, for example, the Secretary felt the Treasurer was stealing money, then a unanimous decision would not be possible.

Section 5.2 – Complaints Process

GJ: Should this process be followed for escalating concerns surrounding the decisions of Standing Committee?

DW: This is something that hasn't been considered, but DW will give it some thought.

BM: Feels stages 3 and 4 do not give adequate opportunity for the complainant to represent themselves. It is perfectly possible that they are unable to attend the meeting earmarked for the decision. This is not acceptable. Prior to the appeal we would need to run our actions to date through our solicitor.

SH: The large part of the make up of an AGM is a Council Meeting. Normally an appeal is considered by different people to those who made the original decision. We could maybe ask the President to consider the appeal, and therefore absent him or herself from the Council Meeting that discusses it.

NW: There is also the option of external agencies too.

Section 5.6 – Disciplinary Process

SH: Has the same concerns as with the Complaints Process, but this time they are even stronger.

BM: On adoption of any finished disciplinary policy we will need to send it to all persons who may be subject to a disciplinary process.

EP: We also need to bear in mind employee contracts. EP recommends specifically excluding employees from the proposed disciplinary policy.

GJ: We need to clarify the section on transferring CIM affiliation to another club.

HB: If we suspend the Club, then we need to ensure all the CIMs from that club are informed of this.

NW: We need to change the note on suspending insurance cover to say "may" rather than "will".

IP: If we suspend a club, then its members should be allowed to remain BCA members.

LW: They have already paid, and we should continue to support them.

BM: We need a separate bullet point saying that the treatment of individuals will be different from that of a club.

LP: Believes we need to split the treatment of club and individual members from that of award holders because their livelihood is at stake.

DW: Doesn't see that this will alter the proposed process. Clearly, if a decision involves suspending an award holder, then the effect on their livelihood will need to be balanced against the need to protect groups from harm. However this doesn't alter the process outlined.

LP: We need to consider what we will do in specific situations such as someone falling while climbing a ladder unlined, or a group getting stuck due to flooding.

- DW: We cannot reasonably create a list of every possible scenario and then give a pre-determined response to it. It is not only unworkable, but it also fails totally to take account of individual circumstances.
- LW: Are we ever going to involve ourselves in a situation where an individual club caver is using incorrect techniques, such as climbing a ladder unlifeline?
- DW: Almost certainly not.
- NW: We need to treat all those who have a contractual relationship with the organisation separately using a defined procedure.
- DW: Even if the procedure is the same for both?
- NW: Yes. In the event of a complaint being made against someone who is an Award Holder, we should initially ask Training Committee if they feel the complaint has anything to do with their Award. If not, it can be passed through the member procedures.
- BM: We are also in effect making our appointed anchor installers into award holders. We may need to consider that here too.

Action 90: DW to continue to consult on the Complaints & Disciplinary Policies and redraft existing proposals to better reflect the views of Council.

Section 5.10.1 – 5.10.7 Membership

- GJ: There are 4 Group members mentioned, but the text says there are 3. In addition Access Bodies appear to be missing.

Section 5.11 Making Policy

- IW: There are some policies given in full, others refer to downloadable links and the Conservation Policy requires people to pay to receive it. This is strange.
- DW: In general DW tried to avoid duplicating policy that was already published on the website, so that we have only one master document. There are some policies not on the website and the Cave Conservation Policy runs to about 30 pages and does not seem to exist in electronic format at all.
- NW: Has a scanned version of the Cave Conservation Policy.
- IW: 30 pages is ridiculous. The Conservation Policy should be on one page.
- EL: There are currently 3 different documents. We need to look at combining these and producing a shortened version. There is a summary in the Handbook.
- BM: Is not sure there is in fact a properly endorsed Fixed-Aids Policy. Recommends suspending the whole section on Policies until we have clarified all the issues. Another issue is the Publications Policy.
- LW: It may be that this has not ever been formally adopted.

AGM Date

- JP: The Spring Bank Holiday week already has two days of holidays so we may have people on holiday over the previously advertised weekend.
- DW: As a general principle we shouldn't move pre-arranged dates as it is unfair on those who have planned things around them. However the AGM rarely attracts many people who are not already at Council, so it is probably worth moving from the advertised Sunday, 10th June to Saturday, 9th June if Council members feel it is a better day for them. **Action 91: DW to advertise that the AGM will be on Saturday, 9th June.**
- HB: Is it really the case that the AGM is largely only attended by Council members plus one or two others?
- DW: Yes.
- HB: That's awful.
- DW: It is hoped that by moving the event to a caving region and combining it with other activities, we will manage to change this. The Rotary Club in Castleton has been booked to allow us to do this in 2013. Unfortunately this year we have not managed to find a suitable venue.

The remainder of the Secretary's Report was accepted unanimously.

8. Treasurer's Report (written report previously circulated)

- PI: Unfortunately the budget, asset register and cashflow are somewhat delayed, but will be completed prior to the next meeting. The 2011 Accounts should also be in draft format prior to the next meeting and fully complete by the AGM. There needs to be a formal sign off of the 2010 Regional accounts, but this is also in progress. Please let PI know of anything coming up that will represent significant expenditure, so that he can ensure sufficient funds are in the appropriate accounts.
- LW: There is likely to be some money spent soon on gates, but the subsequent BCA claim is probably 6 months away.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted unanimously.

9. Conservation & Access Officer's Report

EL: EL read the following report:

"Some time back I mentioned that the effluent from metalliferous mines had been drawn to the attention of Parliament. Since then there has been a further mention in the White Paper "Water for Life". The indication is that a sum of money will be set aside for cleaning the effluent as it leaves the mines in the worst cases. There has been no suggestion so far of any alterations to the underground workings or to access.

The White Paper indicates the intentions of the Government to implement a new Water Bill early in 2012 which will radically change the water industry. The intentions would seem to make the industry more open to market development by facilitating trading in licences, permitting higher abstraction especially for industry and opening the market to further providers using the current infrastructure or developing new systems.

The new River Basin Management Plans, due in 2012, will be expected to address the collection of higher volumes of water and concentrate on local issues and water requirements.

Clearly this may impact on the underground environment and I would ask members to be observant as the Bill goes forwards and as the River Basin Management Plans are drawn up round the Regions.

The other significant matter nationally is that of Shale Gas Exploitation (fracking). This too is under Parliamentary review and so far the industry is being restrained from activities that may cause us problems. That is not to say we can rest easy. It is hoped that BCRA's scientists will monitor the situation and keep us informed. They are far more qualified to do so than others of us!

None-the-less I have read widely round the matter and come to the conclusion that real evidence is thin on the ground and obscured by a great deal of wild hearsay. It is for that reason that I declined to respond to the call from the FSE to support their open letter to the European Commission. I suggest that we should only become embroiled in such matters when absolutely sure of the facts. That the matter has been put to the EC by FSE is surely enough for now to flag up concerns.

As regards our working to reach a concordat with the Forestry Commission I regret to say the negotiations have slowed in England but are proceeding steadily in Wales where we await the responses from the FC lawyers. The "blue-print" for this is the agreement negotiated some years back with the National Trust. Although the NT has been generally re-organised and the personnel with whom the agreement was negotiated have left, the substance is still known in the Regions and is still proving helpful to cavers and indicates the usefulness of working for such concordats."

The Conservation & Access Officer's Report was accepted unanimously

10. Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report *(written report circulated)*

The Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report was accepted unanimously

11. Acting Training Officer's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

NB: Has held some initial discussions with Mary on the new database. However, the first draft wasn't right and NB will be meeting Mary this week. Level 1 assessments are down, but level 2 up. CIC assessments are also down, but one person is almost complete. CIC revalidations are now arranged in a slightly different way. Previously courses were arranged by the T/A and were being cancelled when there was insufficient demand. Now, though, Mary leads this process by looking at revalidations due in a period and then asking T/As to set up a course to meet the expected demand. This has worked much better, with very few courses having to be cancelled. The overall revalidation process made a surplus of £5 last year.

IP: Are there plans to modularise the LCMLA and CIC?

NB: No.

Long-Churn Document

BM: The document is very useful but wonders if it is possible to find the weather forecasts?

EL: The document is clear and spine-chilling. However it doesn't anywhere say that conditions are very variable and people may be lulled into a false sense of security by the timings at the back. Conditions are very variable and we ought to highlight this.

Proposal: *That the Long-Churn document be published online subject to inclusion of a caveat about the timings and, if possible, weather forecasts on that day.*

Prop: JP Sec: LW agreed unanimously

Action 92: NB, DW and LW to liaise over publication of the Long Churn document.

BM: Does this mean we can now consider putting up other documentation?

DC: If it justifies its existence, it should be there. We will then make sure we have the space to accommodate it.

The remainder of the Training Officer's Report was accepted unanimously.

12. Publications & Information Report

LW: We are looking for a volunteer to become Newsletter Editor. Believes the next edition of *Speleology* is fairly imminent. LW has the radon booklet to check for typos. This will then go to DW for a final proof-read, and will then subsequently be presented to Council at the next meeting.

a. Webmaster's Report (*Web Services written report previously circulated*)

LW: The IT group will look at the website.

b. Newsletter Editor's Report

MC: A reminder than MC is intending to step down at the AGM.

c. Handbook Editor's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

The Publications & Information Reports were accepted unanimously.

13. Legal & Insurance Report

DJu: Is working on the 3rd Edition of the Legal & Insurance booklet and is now waiting for some additional content on Club Huts.

LW: Is happy to assist with the Club Huts section having spent some time recently researching this.

a. Insurance Manager's Report

NW: The £2m PL Policy premium has been renewed at a cost of £30,030. This is the same rate as last year. The additional premium for the Irish is £2,060 and the separate policy topping up our liability from £2m to £5m has been purchased from Chartis for £7,314. It is worth noting that the cost of this is more than £1 per member.

The remainder of the Legal & Insurance Officer's and Insurance Manager's Reports were accepted unanimously.

Other Reports

14. Youth & Development

JC: The Outdoor Show in Birmingham has been cancelled this year. The London show is next weekend, but attending this event is very unattractive for us, due to a combination of timings and location. Cliffhanger will, therefore, be our main focus this year.

NW: Cliffhanger is a lot more our sort of show and if there were another similar event in the South, that would potentially be very useful.

FL: Have you considered the Bath & West Show? They were quite keen for some caver input this year.

15. Membership Administrator's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

NW: Is there a document that describes what is expected of a new member club?

GJ: It is online.

SH: The Insurance FAQs is the 2008 version. Maybe we should update this?

LW: It is possible that the downloadable document has been updated, but not the web version.

DC: The trends in membership numbers are very promising.

GJ: Issued 880 new membership numbers last year.

HB: What our sport struggles with most is an average 3-year caving life. Is there something we could do to address the reasons behind this?

BM: Is it worth asking NW to ask GJ to try to analyse this? Maybe we could also send letters to an identified group asking them of their reasons for not rejoining.

JC: Did try to analyse the data last year but found that without collecting members' dates of birth, it is very difficult to find out anything.

CE: In a 3-year period people have done the classic trips in the classic caves. Either you are addicted to caving, or you are a tourist.

BP: Different clubs have a different membership make-up. The Orpheus have very few ex-University members, but still have a 10% turnover annually.

GJ: With a bit of effort you could identify which 2010 members did not renew in 2011. However, before doing this you need to decide what you want to do with the information, otherwise there is no point doing the initial exercise.

JP: Is the turnover in DIMs or CIMs or both?

GJ: Hasn't looked at that.

Proposal: *In 4 months' time GJ to send a letter to 80 random people who have not rejoined in 2012 asking for their reasons.*

Prop: BM Sec: IW agreed unanimously

Action 93: In May GJ send a letter to 80 random people who have not rejoined in 2012 asking for their reasons.

MM: It would make sense to add to the letter the option of just purchasing publications?

DW: Good idea.

FL: Maybe it is worth offering an incentive to reply?

Under-16 Membership Fees

IP: For years Education in the Environment Caving Club (EECC) had operated under the assumption that we did not need insurance for our children. This was incorrect and the cost affects us considerably as we are an organisation that takes a substantial number of young people from very different backgrounds caving. With the current membership rates a small number of the more well off are subsidising the less well-off young people. IP then referred to the arguments printed in the attached Reports document.

GJ: Are you asking about CIMs specifically? There are currently some DIMs who are joint members with their parents.

IP: Would hope that this would apply to all Under 16s.

NW: How long do people remain as members of your club?

IP: We take children from all sorts of places and run a continuous experience for them, that lasts for a number of years. We make use of temporary membership initially and will only be seeking membership for those we know will stay at it.

MD: Is there anyone who is willing to formally propose and second IP's request?

Proposal: *Caving-Club Members under 16 years of age should not be charged for BCA membership.*

Prop: IW Sec: DCh

IW: Would this include Scouts?

NW: Free membership is a real concern because you never actually know if people want it. It also creates another membership category and associated difficulties. A simpler solution is to ask Council to give a grant to the members of your club as Council then have control of the situation.

HB: EECC is not the only club with "under 16" members. We are in danger of opening a can of worms.

NW: The possibility of a claim against an Under 16 is perfectly possible, although quite small.

JP: There are two different issues here. One is in the special case of EECC where there are a large number of younger members. The other is a typical club with a small number of younger members, where they can simply choose to subsidise those youngsters.

LW: A further difference is that EECC has a large number of children who are members without their parents.

JC: If it is a blanket rule, then all under 16s who go caving will simply put their name on the list. If you require them to apply for a grant for a specific situation, that is much better.

NW: There is every reason why clubs should be encouraging younger people to be part of their membership.

PI: Takes the view that £8 is not a lot of money for an annual membership. If we start from the point of view that the money has to be paid up front and then refunded, then that is preferable.

FL: What sort of children would you be looking to include on your list?

IP: Those who are going to be staying with us and have already been temporary members.

IW and DCh withdrew their proposal.

Proposal: *The Executive be authorised to consider a grant application by EECC to cover the subscription costs of their Under-16 Membership.*

Prop: IW Sec: DCh agreed with one abstention

Action 94: The Executive consider a grant application by EECC to cover the subscription costs of their Under-16 Membership.

DC: Do we need to look at a longer-term solution to this? Should we delegate this in the future to a Committee, or are we happy for Council to take a lead on this?

JC: Maybe it sits well within the Y&D portfolio.

BCRA Membership

DCh: To put IP's request into context, the returns from the BCRA questionnaire to its membership found 1 member

between the ages of 25 and 30, and no undergraduate members at all. Over 80% of our existing membership is over 50. It is clear, therefore, that BCRA has an “old” membership and we should really look at ways to address this to ensure BCRA’s future.

IP: BCRA is about the most expensive society you can possibly join as a student at the moment. Even the RGS is about £40. It is not clear why you have to pay BCA money in order to join BCRA.

LW: The reason you need to join BCA to be a BCRA member was the whole idea of the one-stop shop. BCA handle BCRA’s membership and BCRA made the rule that you have to join BCA to be a BCRA member in the first place anyway.

IW: Wasn’t aware that you had to be a DIM or CIM Plus to join BCRA.

NW: Gave 10 years of his life to get to a situation where you do not need to join two separate organisations. Can we afford to make BCRA membership free? We need to start thinking seriously about making this work in the longer term. BCRA shouldn’t have individual members, but simply be a sub-Committee of BCA.

FL: Is there an option to have online versions of BCRA’s publications only?

DW: Yes.

HB: It is a great idea to give students a discounted rate for a few years, but they then graduate and in the current economic climate struggle financially while looking for a job. All we are going to be doing is causing a spike at student level and a fall-off later.

SH: The demographics of BCRA membership are very unhealthy. We need to move to a point where BCRA does not need a separate subscription. Outside of this meeting we need to find mechanisms to pursue this further.

GJ: Last year of the 505 DIMs 251 were also BCRA members. 55 of these DIMs were non-caving DIMs. Of those less than 50 will have been BCRA members. It is therefore clear that the vast majority of BCRA members are in fact insuring themselves as caving members.

JC: RGS have been around a lot longer than us, have a lot of members, and charge the older members a lot of money. The RGS comparison with BCRA is not helpful.

DC: NW has touched on a big issue that we did once begin to address. We currently offer a £9 discount on membership for student CIMs. However we don’t then offer this to DIMs, which means a student wanting to join BCRA cannot take advantage of the student discount.

BM: The main reason for the separation between CIMs and DIMs originally was that a large number of people wanted to pay the minimum possible fee.

Proposal: *That we introduce a DIM Student Rate of £15 for all full-time students.*

Prop: DW Sec: LW

JC: How will we be able to confirm that someone is indeed a full-time student? A lot of people have student cards without actually being a full-time student.

HB: You can ask a University to issue you a letter for tax reasons. Maybe we should require this rather than a student card.

DC: Maybe somebody should write this proposal up properly and present it at the next meeting.

DW then withdrew his proposal.

Proposal: *That we accept the principle of a discount for student members, but the details for implementing this be worked out by GJ, NW and PI.*

Prop: NW Sec: JP agreed unanimously

Action 95: GJ, NW and PI work out the details of implementing a student-member discount.

JC: We need to remember that the real financial issues are faced once people have left Uni.

SH: Who does the current Student Rate apply to?

GJ: Anyone applying for CIM membership who is a student in full-time education, or under 18 years of age.

List of Member Clubs

DW: Is Council happy for us to publish a list of member clubs on the BCA website? There will be no further data included. This is following a request from a club with a hut that would like to offer a discount to BCA member clubs.

LW: Do we have Data Protection issues with doing this?

NB: Provided we publish nothing other than the club names, all we would need to ensure was that the list was up-to-date.

Action 96: DW to publish a list of BCA Member Clubs on the BCA website and liaise with GJ to keep it up to date.

The remainder of the Membership Administrator’s Report was accepted unanimously.

16. Radon Working Party Convenor's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

The Radon Working Party Convenor's Report was accepted unanimously.

17. Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

DC: The key benefit of the Archive is that the survey data won't be lost. No doubt the CSG will publish its location and thus generate more traffic.

The Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report was accepted unanimously.

18. International Representative's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

FSE Report (*written report previously circulated*)

GJ: Do we have a date and venue for Hidden Earth yet? Is it possible to arrange the date of the Hidden Earth to fit around the Swiss event?

LW: There are advantages to moving it. However it is very annoying that the Swiss have taken our date. There is quite a strong feeling among the Hidden Earth team that we shouldn't be moving the date.

The International Representatives' Reports were accepted unanimously.

19. Media-Liaison Officer's Report

No report received.

20. British Caving Library Report (*written report previously circulated*)

JP: Has tracked down figures for the Library. These will be e-mailed to the Secretary after the meeting. [*Secretary's note: The figures were included in an updated Library Report, which has been included in the attached Reports document.*]

21. Any Other Business

HB: The October Minutes report GJ asking how University clubs would react to having one University club to which all students belong. HB reports that it is certain that each club would react to it very badly indeed!

22. Date, Time & Place of next meeting

The next Council Meeting will be held at 10:30am on Saturday, 24th March 2012 at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch.

The meeting closed at 16:10

Action Log – January 2012

No.	Action by ...	Details of Action
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6	PI	Update Bank Mandates.
36	DW	Put together a Manual of Operations
54	NW & DJu	Liaise with SUI with a view to helping them streamline their insurance situation.

October 2011

79	CJ	Create “BCA Approved Provider” logo for use by BCA T/As, then pass to MW for distribution.
83	PI	Produce an Asset Register and liaise with NW/EP over the total replacement value of our insured equipment.
84	AE, PI and DW	Consider David Gibson’s proposals on the funding of Speleology.
86	CJ	Investigate appropriate ways of backing up the media-liaison role in his absence and bring them back to the next meeting.

January 2012

88	DW	Update Working Parties section of the draft Manual of Operations following the creation of an IT Working Party and to consider including a formal annual review of a Working Party’s remit.
89	DW	Continue to consult on voting in Standing Committees and redraft existing proposals to better reflect the views of Council.
90	DW	Continue to consult on the Complaints & Disciplinary Policies and redraft existing proposals to better reflect the views of Council.
91	DW	Advertise that the AGM will be on Saturday, 9th June.
92	NB, DW and LW	Liaise over publication of the Long Churn document.
93	GJ	In May send a letter to 80 random people who have not rejoined in 2012 asking for their reasons.
94	AE, DW and PI	Consider a grant application by EECC to cover the subscription costs of their Under 16 Membership.
95	GJ, NW and PI	Work out the details of implementing a student-member discount.
96	DW	Publish a list of BCA Member Clubs on the BCA website and liaise with GJ to keep it up to date.



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Council Meeting, 7th January 2012

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Item 6: Chairman's Report

First of all "Happy New Year" to everybody. I must apologise again for not attending this meeting, but I am delighted to say for my sake, I am in Australia, or actually during the period of the meeting, flying from Perth to Auckland, New Zealand.

After this I should start by thanking Mick Day sincerely for chairing this meeting. I look forward to receiving the minutes.

Since the last Council Meeting Damian has continued working on his Manual of Operations. What he presented at the last Council Meeting was well received and I am very grateful for the work that he is putting in on this. It should help in many ways with BCA logistics into the future.

Five of us visited Buckingham Palace on the 8th December. I seemed to be included in an executive list of British Explorers being included in a photograph of thirteen others including: Michael Palin, Chris Bonnington, David Attenborough, Sir Ranulph Fiennes and unfortunately Bear Grylles. I managed a conversation with most of these, the most interesting were the two British astronauts, Timothy Beak and Helen Sharman, who approached me saying, "we are the only ones doing proper exploration". I am not sure the media fully appreciate that, but it probably was a good night for raising the profile of caving and making it more publically acceptable.

I have been unsuccessful at finding a suitable venue for a BCA/BCRA weekend coinciding with the BCA AGM for 2012. I have however, booked the Rotary Centre, Castleton for the weekend 13th-15th June 2013. I will discuss the details of this with people later but the idea is a BCRA Science meeting, a Saturday evening party and a Council Meeting and AGM. If this is successful in 2013 it may set the format for future events.

There are many other things that have been going on, but I am sure they will come up under other people's reports.

Have a good meeting.

Andy Eavis, January 2012

Item 7: Secretary's Report

1) Draft Manual of Operations Part II: Work on the Manual of Operations continues and I would like to ask for Council's endorsement of the next chunk, appended to these Reports. It has evolved in the last few weeks, so please make sure you refer to the most recent version.

Apart from the section on General Meetings, which will be presented in March, this pretty much brings to an end the sections that I can complete. The next major stages are: Finances; procedures for individual Standing Committees; procedures for Working Parties; Head-Office Procedures; Membership Processes; and Training Administrator's Processes. There are also other smaller sections on: Artificial Cave; Copyright; Data Protection; Employees; Publishing a Document; Web Services; and Website. Needless to say in the coming weeks I will be encouraging many Council members to help complete their sections.

I would also like to highlight a separate section of the Manual for individuals to outline the ways in which they operate. This will be extremely useful for future post holders, as well as providing a good overview for anyone else with an interest. At the moment, we would probably be in a difficult position if key people such as Nick Williams, David Gibson, Mary Wilde, or Glenn Jones were unable to continue with their existing roles. If, as I hope, everyone completes their section over the next year, then we will have moved a long way towards BCA not being reliant on any one individual for the running of certain areas of our Organisation.

2) CHECC Rep: I am very pleased to be able to welcome Hellie Brooke as CHECC Rep to BCA. Hellie is exactly the sort of person BCA needs to attract if we are to be a strong and successful into the future.

3) "Weather & its Effects on Caves: a Guide for Cavers": Executive were charged by the October Council Meeting with collating concerns about the proposed document, and then subsequently liaising with GM with a view to publication. This process was completed by mid-December when a slightly amended version was published online. Thank you to all those who submitted comments and to the Training Committee for their considerable efforts in pulling it together over the last few years.

4) Publishing Policy: The whole process of the Weather document has brought home to me the importance of rationalising our publishing process and I have begun work on this with Les Williams as part of the Manual of Operations. It is hoped that the P&I Committee will be able to consider the draft version of this before the March Council Meeting.

5) National Park Authority Vacancies: I have received a letter from DEFRA asking for volunteers to apply to fill several vacancies on the various National Park Authorities. The vacancies of interest to cavers are: NY Moors (2), Peak District (1) and

Yorkshire Dales (2). The posts are unpaid, but there is an allowance and expenses are payable. There is also a minimum time commitment of 2-3 days per month. If anyone knows of any cavers interested in these unpaid posts, please let me know.

6) Annual General Meeting: Andy reports that he has been unable to secure a suitable venue for the proposed AGM weekend in June 2012. As such we would like to suggest to Council that the 2012 AGM be held, as previously, at Alvechurch Village Hall (assuming it is available) on Saturday, 9th June, rather than the Sunday, as had been previously agreed. Constitutionally I need to have informed members of the date and venue before the end of January, so I need this meeting to make a final decision. It is currently my intention to post the notifications on a piece of A5 card, as I did last year. However, if anyone has anything they would like posting out at the same time, I can alter this to envelopes at minimal additional cost (but more of my time to stuff, stick labels etc). I will need to know within a couple of days, as I'll be making a start on posting them out the following weekend.

Damian Weare, January 2012

[Secretary's note:] The following proposal relating to the Manual of Operations has been received from Cookie:

Committee Voting – Manual of Operations Section 1.7

It has been proposed that "In addition other Committee members may be co-opted by the Standing Committee [...] However, these co-opted members are appointed in an advisory capacity and although encouraged to take part in all discussions, they do not have a formal vote."

This is a workable solution and has merit. It also has some downsides which I would like to explore and then propose an alternative.

1. The smaller the number of voters, the worse it is for good decision making and democracy. This proposal reduces the numbers voting.
2. Generally no Constituent Bodies other than the Regional Councils attend Committee Meetings. At best you'll only have 5 voting reps., usually it will be less. There was a notable C&A meeting that had only two voters awarding grants.
3. Co-opted members are on the committee for their special skills which would suggest their vote, if allowed, would be well considered and of value.
4. Co-opted members are unlikely to feel valued if their voice is not recognised with a vote. They are less likely to volunteer their service. The Committees will struggle to find good and capable volunteers.
5. The above proposal includes the phrase "formal vote". An interpretation is that co-opted members can take part in "informal votes". Is that the intention? If so it needs to be made clear what issues are voted on formally and which are not.

PROPOSAL:

I'm going to use the V word. There seems to be a knee jerk reaction against it. Please take time to consider it as an option.

My proposal is that "co-opted members have a vote but the interests of the Constituent Bodies are protected with a veto."

1. This proposal deals with all the points 1-5 above.
2. The argument against the veto is that it blocks progress. That would not be the case because when an impasse occurs, it could be escalated to National Council for resolution, where there is no veto.
3. The committee is more likely to work at resolving the impasse in the face of a veto.
4. With a veto all parties remain with the status quo looking for a solution. The alternative is that the aggrieved party is left in limbo because the prior policy or scheme no longer exists.
5. To stop a wayward rep. I also propose that "If a Constituent Body's Rep. uses the veto it must be ratified by a vote of that Constituent Body at the first available opportunity"

I have considered various schemes, it seems to me my proposal is the simplest and most straight forward way of enhancing the democracy of the committees.

David Cooke, January 2012

Item 8: Treasurer's Report

Since the previous Council meeting, unforeseen additional work commitments have prevented me from making as much progress as I had hoped. Day-to-day operational finance matters have been kept ticking over, but some of the more developmental items are still outstanding.

On the positive side, payments on account relating to Regional Council funding claims for 2010 have now been made; these are subject to formal ratification by the Finance Committee, but to date I am unaware of any reason that will prevent such ratification. No payment has been made to CSCC as I had no 2010 accounts to consider – should there be any claim outstanding, this will be accrued in the 2011 Accounts. The Cliffhanger funding agreed at the last Council meeting has also been paid to DCA and the Association's 2010 Tax Return was completed and submitted prior to the 31st December deadline.

The bank-mandate transfer process continues slowly. I had hoped to have all these completed, but some remain to be finalised. Thanks are due to Cookie for his continued assistance.

It was my intention to have an updated Budget and Cash Flow forecast available for circulation at this point, but these are still in progress. Likewise the Asset Register; I have received various submissions for inclusion but have not yet been able to pull them together. These items will be completed as soon as possible. BCRA Library financials have been received and these will be considered within the Budget process.

Other issues (e.g. the funding of Speleology and the setting up of Direct Debit facilities) have by necessity had to be deferred; I would hope that these will be picked up in Q1 2012, which I also hope will be less trying and frustrating than Q4 2011!

Paul Ibberson, January 2012

Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report

Nothing received.

Elsie Little, January 2012

Item 10: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report

I reported on progress with the resolution of the IPTD-related dispute at the last Council meeting and I do not propose to re-visit those comments other than to observe that steady progress has been made, and I am now in possession of an assignment of copyright to BCA by Les Sykes and Bob Dearman, authors of the training document. The document itself is in the final stages of being approved following some modifications to reflect the choice of a new anchor (see below) and the intention is to agree this and then publish the document in line with the agreement.

One point which I did not mention at the last Council meeting and which I think it probably is worth drawing to Council's attention is that the Committee resolved at its meeting on 8th October that all anchor placers should be Individual Members of BCA (i.e. DIMs or CIMs).

I am pleased to be able to report that the Committee has now settled on a choice for a replacement to the DMM Eco Anchor. The chosen anchor comes from Bolt Products and has been subjected to an extensive test programme undertaken by Bob Dearman, Les Sykes and Glenn Jones. Bolt Products donated a quantity of anchors in return for access to BCA's test results. Records of the tests are in the E+T archives.

Although the basic choice of anchor has now been made, we will continue to need the bolt tester for a variety of purposes - issues which still need to be addressed include the long-term performance of the anchors, alternative resins and the suitability of the anchor for substrates other than competent limestone. A better quality ram with a longer throw has been purchased for the bolt tester and will be installed (probably on Sunday after the Council meeting). It would also be desirable to obtain a two-speed pump.

With regard to other matters on the agenda for the meeting on Saturday, as Convenor I have grave concerns about the proposed voting structure for special committees, and I know this concern is shared by at least some other E+T members. I believe it is essential that technical experts co-opted by the special committees should have the same voting rights as other members of the Committee. Democracy can be assured by the Committees reporting to Council, but for decisions about finely balanced technical matters, every voice around the table should be on an equal footing.

Finally, the next E+T meeting is scheduled to be on 17 March.

Nick Williams, January 2012

a) Rope Test Officer's Report

I have sorted out the rope for issue in part 2 of the Long-Term Rope Test. I have organised the purchase of rope for the fixed-aid experiment. I have not had many takers for this work so far however.

Bob Mehew, January 2012

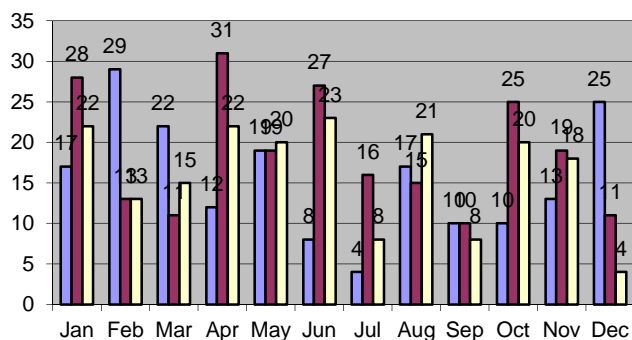
Item 11: Acting Training Officer's Report

A start has been made putting together a specification for a new database. Preliminary discussions have been held between Training Officer and Training Administrator but further progress has proved to be problematic in finding time to meet and discuss requirements with the Training Administrator. The date of 10/01/12 has now been set for the meeting.

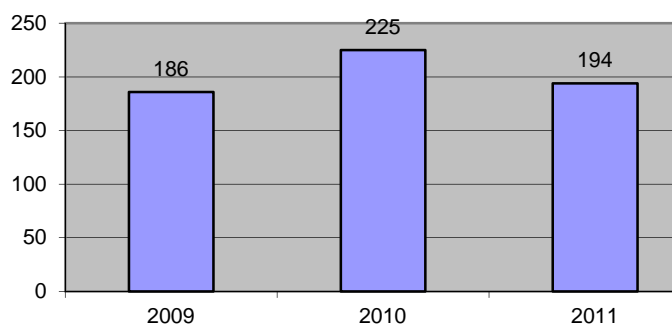
The "Goyden Pot and Manchester Hole" document and the "Weather and its effect on caves: a guide for cavers" document have both been accepted and uploaded onto the BCA website for public downloading.

The document on the flooding in Long Churn Cave has still to be approved.

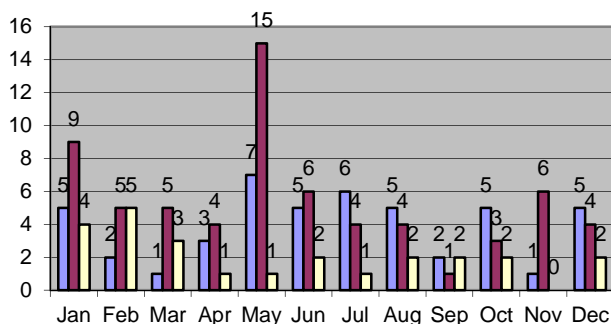
LCMLA Statistics



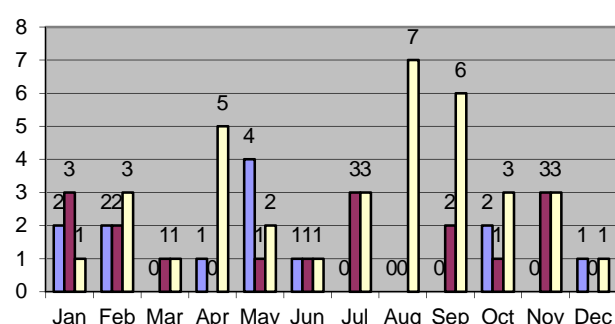
LCMLA Registrations 2009-11



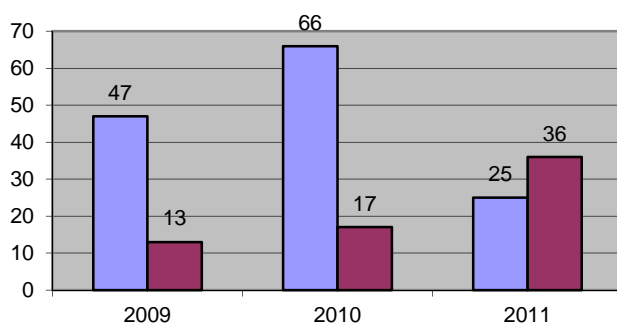
LCMLA Registration Totals 2009-11



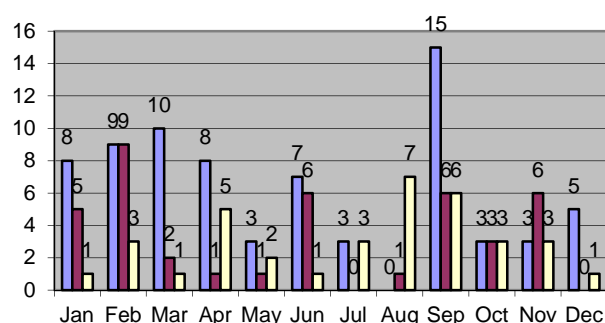
LCMLA Level 1 Initial Assessments 2009-11



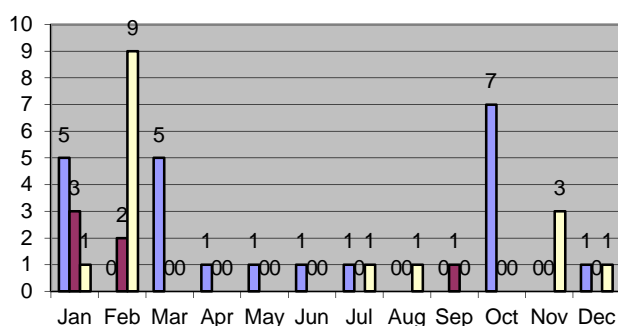
LCMLA Level 2 Initial Assessments 2009-11



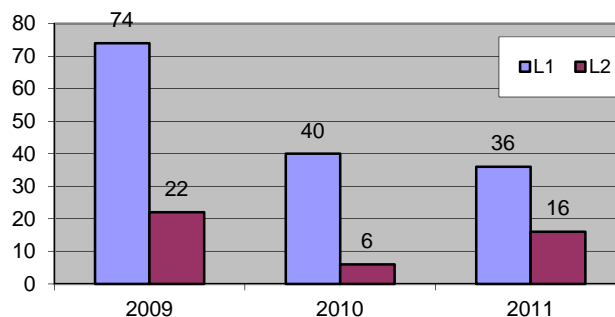
LCMLA Initial Assessment Totals 2009-11



LCMLA Level 1 Revalidations 2009-11



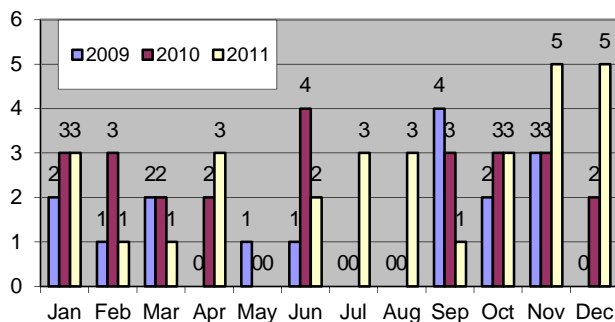
LCMLA Level 2 Revalidations 2009-11



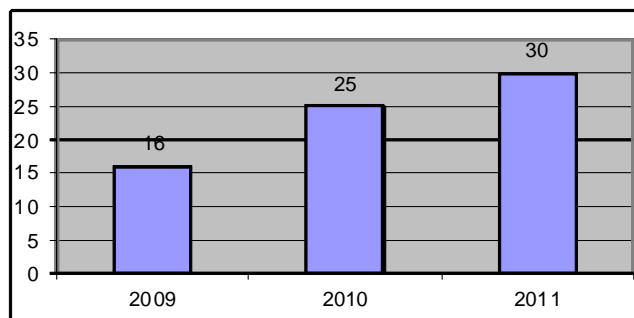
LCMLA Revalidation Totals 2009-11

We may see increase next year in LCML awards. After the demise of ALLS, HSE may put in place a mandatory method of proving a competence within a new Code of Practice or voluntary Code of Practice. Such competences may be shown through formal qualifications. There may still be an inspecting system in one form or another.

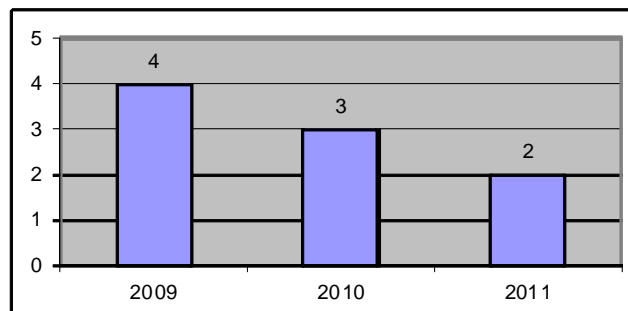
CIC Statistics



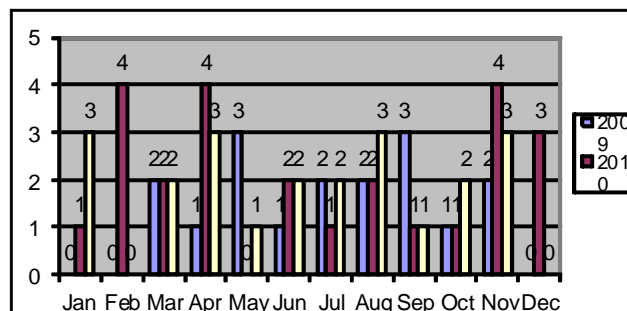
CIC Registrations 2009-11



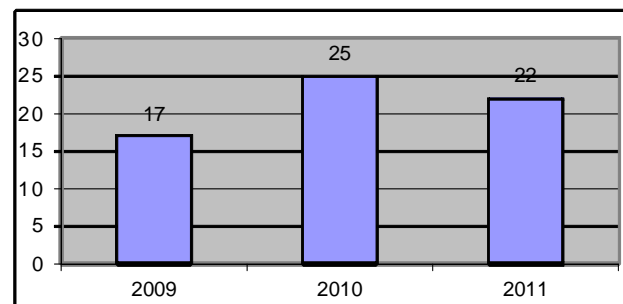
CIC Registrations Totals 2009-11



CIC Initial Assessments 2009-11



CIC Revalidation Totals 2009-11



The process of running revalidations for both LCML and CIC should financially break even: the intention is not to make a profit. Over a period of three years, from 2009 to 2011, the net result has been a profit, but the general trend is reducing. This should be looked upon as being favourable. The financial breakdown is shown in the table to the right.

	LCMLA	CIC
2009	£1,887.00	£420.00
2010	£459.97	£225.00
2011	£179.60	£609.00

A working committee from NCP has been set up by the previous Training Officer to draft a working document looking into the role of a technical advisor for caving. An initial meeting has been held.

Nigel Ball, January 2012

Item 12: Publication & Information Officer's Report

Nothing received.

Les Williams, January 2012

a) Webmaster's Report

Nothing received.

Les Williams, January 2012

Web Services: The number of domains hosted is steadily growing with 3 new hosted domains added in the last quarter. There has been renewed effort to move those sites hosted on the Fasthosts server to the Memset server. 1 has been completed. 2 are in progress.

David Cooke, January 2012

b) Newsletter Editor's Report

Nothing received.

Mike Clayton, January 2012

c) Handbook Editor's Report

Work on the 2013 version will begin before the next Council Meeting. As ever, I would be pleased to receive any suggestions for improving last year's. I will also be annoying the various Officers, Working Party Chairmen, RCC and Constituent Body Secretaries for updates on their sections of the 2012 edition.

While I am happy to continue to edit the Handbook in 2014 and probably beyond, I would also be more than happy to pass it on to a reliable pair of hands, if such a thing can be found. This would free me up to give more time to Secretarial issues, and may also be a way to bring in another interested volunteer.

Damian Weare, January 2012

Item 13: Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

Nothing received.

David Judson, January 2012

Item 13a: Insurance Manager's Report

Nothing received.

Nick Williams, January 2012

Item 14: Youth & Development Officer's Report

Nothing received.

James Collings, January 2012

Item 15: Membership Administrator's Report

BCA Membership to December 30th 2011

DIMs: 431 (caving), 55 (non-caving), 12 (CIM Plus) and 7 (BCRA Honorary) (including 251 BCRA members)

CIMs: 4413 (caving), 1022 (non-caving)

Clubs: 174, Associates: 10, Access: 5

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

880 new membership numbers were issued during 2011: 11,391 – 12,271.

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

*Including 21 CIM Plus members in 2010 and 12 in 2011

BCA 2012 renewal process: The 2012 Renewal Process started on 1st December when all Group members were e-mailed their 2012 renewal pack. For clubs, this meant a cut of their 2011 membership spreadsheet, together with the associated application forms. DIM renewal letters were posted in mid December (with thanks to David Gibson for arranging this).

As of today (30th December 2011), I can report that 112 DIMs have been processed (many renewing on-line between Christmas and the New Year resulting in two manic card printing sessions), 28 clubs (representing 435 CIMs and 1 CIM Plus member) have been processed, with a further 5 clubs (250 CIMs) part processed (the card-printing file has been built, cards will be printed and posted by the end of next week) and a further 5 clubs in the pending file.

New Clubs: The following clubs have supplied the correct paperwork and payment in order to become BCA member clubs: "Hainslack Caving Club" and "Cleveland Mining History Society".

Glenn Jones, January 2012

[Secretary's note:] I have received two requests about Membership from a member, Ian Peachey. These are as follows:

1) Under 16 Membership Fees: Could the motion that "members of caving clubs under 16 years of age should not be charged for BCA membership" please be considered at the earliest possible opportunity? Here is my justification:

1. Under 16s are often unwaged and may not be in control of their own finances. Therefore they do not have control of the decision as to whether or not to pay an extra £8 to be a member of a caving club.
2. Under 16s have no third-party liability risk of their own; nobody will ever successfully sue a minor for a caving accident.
3. BCA currently makes a surplus on membership revenues and is looking for ways to encourage youth caving. This would be a good practical way of supporting those clubs who do want to take a proactive stance on engaging young people with caving.
4. BCA should be actively encouraging young people to become members of BCA clubs and should see providing free membership for the relatively small number of children currently engaged in club caving as an investment for the future.

2) Student BCRA Membership: Student members of the BCA should be able to join the BCRA without first having to take out DIM membership of the BCA. Hopefully I will be able to make the meeting, but just in case, here is a justification:

1. At present it is only possible to join the BCRA if you take out DIM membership of the BCA. This means that the cheapest rate at which a student could join BCRA at present is £33 as opposed to £12 if they were allowed to join with their student BCA membership. *[Secretary's Note: I think these figures should read £52 and £28 (reduced by £8 if they do not wish to receive paper copies of Cave & Karst Science)]*
2. Following a straw poll at CHECC it was found that NONE of the students present were members of the BCRA. Following a series of talks and the offer of membership for £10, a number of students went on to join the BCRA at the Conference.
3. Given the fact that students are not joining BCRA under the present system, BCA has nothing to lose by removing this barrier to membership.
4. BCRA desperately needs younger membership and we need to do everything we can to encourage students into BCRA.
5. Most student clubs pay for their club membership out of a fixed subscription fee. This is rarely flexible due to the way Unions administer sign-up fees. Therefore a student caver will not be able to join their student club without paying the amount of money they would need to pay for student BCA membership (£8) and there is no way the cost of becoming a DIM on the web site can take account of this fee that has already been paid. This means that in effect actually being a student member of the BCRA costs £41 which is more even than a non-student would have to pay. *[Secretary's Note: I think this should read £60, reduced by £8 if they do not wish to receive paper copies of Cave & Karst Science. An e-mail to Glenn would also allow the £8 already paid to be taken off the total cost, but Ian is correct that this is not directly possible via the online form].*
6. The BCRA doesn't appear to gain anything itself from the present arrangement and the present system also seems to penalise student cavers who want to engage with cave science. This seems neither fair, nor productive.

Ian Peachey, December 2011

Item 16: Radon Working Party Convenor's Report

Through the tenacious and herculean efforts of Bob Mehew the Radon advice booklet has, we believe, finally got to the end of the rather drawn-out process. As it now stands it does have the blessing of the statutory authorities (even if it may appear as overkill). This should last us for some time as it still looks as if revisions of official views on exposure are still a way off. For the booklet, the final choice of fonts etc., I am happy to leave to the publications group and the Web Master as it will need to be in a form that lends itself to being downloaded. An A5 pdf still looks a reasonable prospect.

Some of the text, in an abbreviated form, will be going into the BCRA Legal & Insurance book. This is in hand.

There have been no enquiries regarding radon in caves since the last meeting. Once we have the new booklet up and running on the website it will be interesting to see if any more enquiries are generated. This was the case with the first edition.

Clark Friend, January 2012

Item 17: Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report

After 12 months dormant and then some teething problems the Cave Survey Archive is now live. See <http://www.cave-registry.org.uk/> and follow the link to the Cheddar Catchment. There you will find all the survey data and notes for some 33 caves including GB, Upper Flood, Charterhouse etc.

The archive helps surveyors do their task with readily available and free software tools. For those who will recognise it, it is an SVN archive.

The advantage to the caving community is that the data is preserved and cannot be lost to the future generations.

David Cooke, January 2012

Item 18: International Representative's Report

There is a lot of detailed work going on within the UIS, in particular trying to sort out the website. A new webmaster has been appointed.

Work continues towards the International Congress in Brno in 2013 with advertising appearing in various places.

The next UIS Meeting will be the 2012 Bureau Meeting. Initially it was proposed for Iran in mid April. However, it is considered that it is still a little risky to take a large group of western people to Iran, so the Bureau has now been moved to Mexico in May, a meeting that I will attend.

Andy Eavis, January 2012

Item 18a: FSE Report

Just to reiterate the main events in the future and concern that the Swiss conference clashes with the 'traditional' Hidden Earth date. Can this be discussed?

- Swiss National Congress has invited the EuroSpeleo Forum 2012 to take place in Moutathal, eastern Switzerland. from 29th Sept-1st Oct (Concern that this will clash with Hidden Earth) The Swiss will not change their date!
- EuroSpeleo Forum 2013 Montpellier (13th anniversary of FFS) (BCA to be contacted re display of UK caving history)
- EuroSpeleo Forum 2013, Czech Republic (Czechs not responded yet)
- EuroSpeleo Forum 2014/15, call to go out
- European Congress 2016, so far UK only applicant. Result imminent.

Ged Campion, January 2012

Item 19: Media-Liaison Officer's Report

Nothing received.

Chris Jewell, January 2012

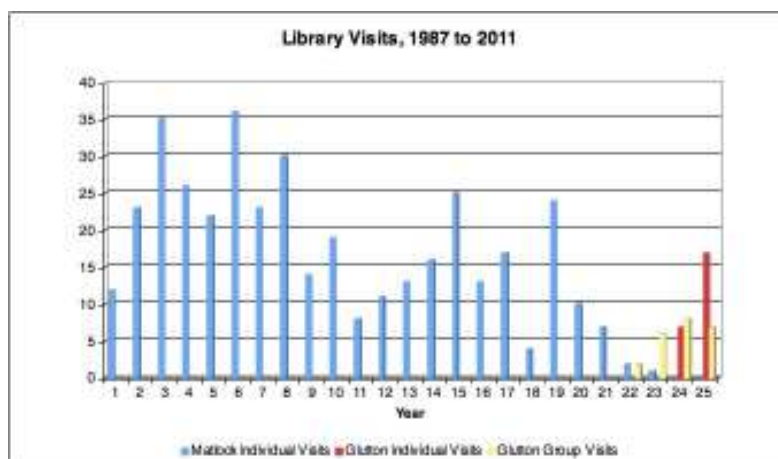
Item 20: British Caving Library Report

Progress to date: We have now been running the British Caving Library in its new home at Glutton Bridge, Derbyshire since July 2008. Although initially the collection was split between the old BCRA Library housed at Matlock Local Studies Library and Glutton Bridge, the Matlock site went out of use as the collection began to be transferred in June 2010 and everything is now housed at the Glutton Bridge site. Because there was no Library Catalogue other than a printed version dating to 2003, the whole collection is being re-catalogued by the Senior Assistant Librarian, Mary Wilde, and myself; Martin Laverty has set up an on-line catalogue which continues to grow as we provide the information; John Gardner runs the Library website at www.caving-library.org.uk and this has links to the on-line catalogue and to the on-line Audio Library.

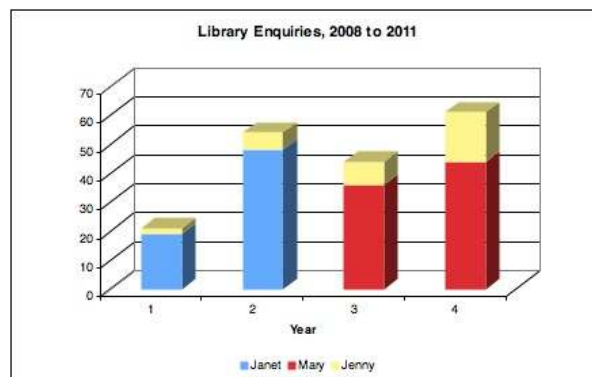
Mary Wilde now works for BCL for 10 hours per week, giving us approximately 500 hours per year of professional help since January 2010. A number of people carry out voluntary work in the Library: myself handling some administration, enquiries and cataloguing; Trevor Faulkner handling the re-starting of foreign Library exchanges (now under way again after several years) and distribution of BCRA publications at science meetings; and other volunteers have moved furniture, transported books, built shelving, etc. (We began with 70m of shelf-length at Matlock and 60m at Glutton Bridge and now have over 200m at Glutton Bridge plus map chests, lockable cupboards, filing cabinets, etc.) The total time spent by volunteers on site in the Library was 383 hours in 2009, 444 hours in 2010 and 593 hours in 2011; in addition some of the volunteers carry out Library business at home, working on websites, cataloguing and correspondence etc. We would welcome more volunteers in the future.

Visitor Numbers: We are now in a position to compare Library usage as we have the BCRA Visitor Records Book from Matlock from 1987-2009 and, since March 2010 we have been able to welcome visitors to the Glutton Bridge Site. The records show 12 visitors to Matlock in 1987, rising and falling each year, but with an overall gradual decline to only one in 2009 and none in 2010. (The Matlock Library was closed at weekends bar one Saturday morning per month.) At Glutton Bridge we are able to provide access, by appointment, at weekends or weekdays; we had 7 visitors during the 10 months of 2010, rising to 17 visitors in 2011. In addition we regularly host

BCRA Council and Library Steering Group Meetings and also hosted a Cave Survey Group Meeting of 7 members in April 2011.



Enquiries: We can find no records of Library enquiries before 2008, though we know some were handled by the professional library staff at Matlock and some by the BCRA Librarian, Roy Paulson. Enquiries received since 2008 range from requests for a photocopy or scan of a named journal article (which can be dealt with in a matter of minutes) to more complicated searches, taking hours or even days, requiring access to websites, journals, abstracts, other publications and, on a few occasions, material from the British Caving Archive, now housed at the British Geological Survey. The bulk of the enquiries are handled by Mary Wilde and analysis shows just over 64 hours spent on enquiries during the 10 months of 2010, rising to just over 98 hours in 2011. Most of our visitors come in to do their own searches and we supply the publications and facilities they need to scan or copy items or conduct their own internet searches.



Donations and purchases: We continue to receive a number of donations of books, journals and off-prints from members of BCRA Council and from other Library users, including brand new and up-to-date publications and electronic media items, as well as donations from older cavers who are “downsizing” collections, which sometimes include valuable items and photographs. (The more valuable items we hold are kept in a locked cupboard.) We are able to buy new publications and have made use of some of the money received from the sale of duplicates; recommendations for items we should hold are welcome. We have also begun to supply other caving libraries with items they are missing and will continue to do this as we work through and identify duplicates we can pass on in this way; we have a number of caving librarians who have sent us their list of “wants” which we hope to be able to supply in time.

Jenny Potts, January 2012

Item 21: Any Other Business

Nothing received.

Manual of Operations Draft

Part II: for consideration at BCA Council 07/01/12



It is intended that Council discuss, amend and subsequently approve each part of the complete draft Manual of Operations over the next year. These are the selected extracts to be considered on 7th January 2012. The original version can be found at www.tinyurl.com/bcamoo.

BCA Manual of Operations – DRAFT (for discussion on 07/01/12)

1. Standing Committees

1.1 Overview

Standing Committees are dealt with under Section 7 of the Constitution.

A Standing Committee is set up by an Annual General Meeting which shall specify its terms of reference.

BCA currently has 5 Standing Committees:

- Conservation & Access
- Equipment & Techniques
- Legal & Insurance
- Training
- Publications & Information

Standing Committees are open to a representative from each of BCA's Constituent Bodies and Regional Councils. In addition they are free to co-opt such experts as they see fit. However, as with BCA Council, these co-opted people do not hold a formal vote.

Within the constraints of the standard operating procedures laid out below, each Standing Committee is free to regulate its own business.

1.2 Transition Period

In order to facilitate a smooth transition to what, for some Standing Committees, will be a new system of voting, a two-year transition period will operate until the BCA AGM in 2014. This will allow Standing Committees time to adapt to the new voting arrangements, with each Committee being free in the meantime to decide on their own procedures. This should be discussed and Minuted annually, and will ideally be accompanied by a discussion on how to move towards being able to implement the new arrangements by June 2014.

1.3 Standing Orders for Standing Committees

The purpose of these Standing Orders is to allow all Standing Committees working as part of BCA to regulate much of their own business whilst also ensuring BCA's interests are safeguarded.

1.4 Notice of Meetings and Agenda

Notice of any meeting of a Standing Committee should be sent to each committee member and members of National Council at least two weeks before the meeting. The Agenda, including the date, time and venue, together with details of all items to be discussed and any relevant supporting papers should also be circulated at least one week before.

As a general rule, an Agenda should contain sections for reports from convenors or others with specific duties, specific headings for items of importance and the arrangements for the next meeting as well as items concerning apologies for absence, previous minutes and any other business.

Templates for an Agenda and Minutes are available to assist Standing Committee convenors.

1.5 Venue for Meetings

Meetings should be arranged by general agreement of members of the committee at a mutually convenient venue suitable for the purpose of the committee. The Doodle website may be useful for arranging a convenient date.

1.6 Frequency and Timing

Committees may meet as business demands but this shall generally be at least once a year.

Where possible, it is suggested that the dates of meetings be agreed for a twelve month period in advance.

Meetings shall be timed to allow the distribution of papers for consideration by National Council such that all members of the National Council receive the papers at least one week before a National Council Meeting. In practice this probably means aiming to meet about one month before a Council Meeting.

1.7 Committee Membership & Voting Procedures

As well as the Standing Committee Convenor, who shall hold the casting vote at Standing Committees, each Constituent Body and Regional Council is entitled to a seat, and a vote, at a Standing Committee. The Constituent Body and Regional Council Representatives shall be confirmed by their Body annually.

In addition other Committee members may be co-opted by the Standing Committee, either to fulfill specific roles, or because they bring special skills. However these co-opted members are appointed in an advisory capacity and, although encouraged to take part in all discussions, they do not hold a formal vote.

1.8 Recording of Meetings

Minutes of meetings should include:

- details of those present
- apologies for absence
- any matters raised from previous minutes
- reports to the Committee (which should be attached to the minutes)
- details of discussions on specific issues, points raised and decisions taken including, where appropriate, records of votes for and votes against.
- a means of indicating actions to be taken outside of the meeting, such as an "Action Log".

Minutes and other papers should be distributed as soon as practical after meetings. In the interests of effective communication within BCA, it is considered good practice to distribute Draft Minutes, before they are accepted by the next meeting, rather than waiting for Approved Minutes. However Draft Minutes should be agreed by at least two other members of the Committee, and at least one of Executive prior to publication.

Once checked, Draft Minutes should be sent to:

- all members of the Committee
- anybody who is listed as an attendee, but who would not otherwise receive a copy
- the BCA Secretary (who will then distribute them to all National Council Members)
- any other interested parties

A copy of all Draft Minutes should also be added to the relevant section of the BCA website, ensuring that any Draft Minutes are clearly marked as such, both in the document itself and on the website.

Only in the event of significant changes being made at the following Meeting, should approved Minutes also be distributed, although they should always be updated on the BCA Website.

1.9 Reporting to National Council

See National Council.

3. Executive

3.1 Overview

BCA Executive is governed by Section 6.14 of the Constitution.

3.2 Members

The Constitution states that the Executive is made up of: Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary but that Council may then add further Members, as may be deemed necessary.

3.3 Role

The Executive's main role is to manage the affairs of the Association between Council Meetings. In practice this means:

- assisting with, and advising on, the running of Standing Committees and Working Groups, as needed;
- facilitating efficient working of the Association by acting as a 'filter' through which proposed changes are initially run;
- making any urgent decisions, and subsequent actions, that may become necessary for the good of the Association;
- calling an Emergency General Meeting, should the situation require it.

3.4 Method of Working

By its very nature, the work of the Executive is varied and, therefore, dealt with by the appropriate means at the time. This includes: face-to-face meetings; phone calls; e-mail; and, probably in the future, web conferencing.

When decisions or advice involve the work of a Standing Committee or Working Party, Executive will normally consult as many specialists (usually members of the appropriate Standing Committee or Working Party) as possible, given the required timescale for decision making. The final decision will then normally be made following the advice of the Standing Committee Convenor. **It is extremely unlikely that a decision involving a Standing Committee would ever need to be taken by the Executive only.**

3.5 Decision Making

Decision making is almost exclusively by discussion and mutual agreement. However, in the event that a vote becomes necessary, the Secretary and Treasurer shall have one vote each, and the Chairman the casting vote.

3.6 Procedure for Absence

In the event of one of more Members of the Executive being away and out of contact, the remaining Member, or Members, should aim to deal only with the most urgent, or non-controversial business. Should something urgent arise, then no one single member of Executive should deal with it on their own. Instead they should liaise with at least two other appropriate Council Members first, and make their decision on the basis of this. It is recommended that a record of these discussions be kept.

5.2 Complaints Process

5.2.1 General Principles

- Complaints should be treated seriously and investigated.
- Complaints should be resolved as quickly as reasonably practical given the volunteer nature of the organisation.
- Anyone involved in a complaint (either as the person being complained about, or the person making the complaint) should be given the opportunity to state their case.
- Written records of all actions, including details of the investigation carried out, should be kept and copied to one or more of BCA Executive.
- Any complaint of a potentially criminal nature should **bypass the process below** and be immediately passed onto the Police. One or more members of BCA Executive shall also be informed as soon as possible. All responsibility for BCA's response will then rest with them.

5.2.2 The Process

Stage 1 (Informal Complaint)

Initially an informal complaint should be made to an appropriate person in BCA, such as the relevant Officer or, if the complainant is unwilling, or unable to approach that person, then with one of BCA Executive. The emphasis at this stage is on dealing with the complaint as efficiently and informally as possible.

Stage 2 (Formal Written Complaint)

If the complaint cannot be dealt with satisfactorily at Stage 1, then a formal complaint should be made in writing to the appropriate person in BCA. This will normally be acknowledged in writing within 14 days and the recipient should immediately inform one or more of BCA Executive of the complaint and their intended course of action. In most situations it is anticipated that the complainant will receive a formal written response within 3 weeks of initially making the complaint.

Stage 3 (BCA Council)

Should the complainant be unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, then they should write to the Secretary explaining their complaint. The Secretary will normally acknowledge receipt within 14 days, and include an invitation to attend the next Council Meeting, where the complaint will be discussed. Prior to the Meeting the Secretary should acquire sufficient detail about the nature of the complaint, so that the matter can be dealt with whether or not the complainant is present. The Secretary will then normally write within 14 days of the Council Meeting to formally advise of Council's decision.

Stage 4 (Appeal to BCA AGM)

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3, then they have the right to appeal to the Annual General Meeting. To do this they should write to the Secretary explaining their complaint. The Secretary will normally acknowledge receipt within 14 days, and will include an invitation to attend the Annual General Meeting. The complaint will normally be included on the Agenda immediately following Matters Arising from the previous Minutes. Prior to the Meeting the Secretary should acquire sufficient detail about the nature of the complaint, so that the matter can be dealt with whether or not the complainant is present. The Secretary will then normally write within 14 days of the AGM to formally advise of the AGM's decision.

5.6 Disciplinary Process

5.6.1 General Principles:

- No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter in question has been fully investigated.
- At every stage individuals will have the opportunity to state their case, either themselves or through a representative.

- There is always a right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty.

5.6.2 Process

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

- One or more of BCA Executive will be informed.
- The individual or group will be written to at their last known address advising them of the complaint made against them, and requesting that they state their case. A period of 30 days shall usually be given for this to occur.
- The matter will usually be considered by either the appropriate Standing Committee or National Council depending on the nature of the matter. However, if the matter is sufficiently urgent, then it will be dealt with by BCA Executive following their normal Method of Working.
- The individual or group will be written to again outlining the outcome of the process and giving the opportunity for appeal.
- An appeal against a warning should be dealt with by the next National Council Meeting. An appeal against a suspension or expulsion should be dealt with by the next National Council Meeting, a Special General Meeting, or the next Annual General Meeting, depending on the wishes of the individual or group who is appealing. Until then the disciplinary action will stand.

5.6.3 Sanctions

Every disciplinary case should be considered individually. Available sanctions include:

- a verbal warning.
- a written warning.
- suspension of membership (and/or certificates or awards) for a fixed period.
- expulsion from BCA (and/or removal of certificates or awards).

5.6.4 Notes

- In the case of suspension of membership, this will also include the temporary removal of membership benefits, such as insurance.
- In the case of a club being suspended or expelled, any Club Individual Members from that club will be written to and offered either: a pro-rata refund; the option of transferring their membership to a DIM (on payment of the appropriate fee); or the chance to switch their main club affiliation to another member club. In the event of a successful appeal, BCA will subsequently refund any additional membership fees paid by an individual as a result of the above.
- When a decision involves removing or suspending an individual's leadership or instructing award, it is important to understand that this will probably have a serious impact on their professional well-being, quite likely including an immediate loss of income. This should be borne in mind as part of the decision-making process, but needs to be balanced against the need to maintain confidence in BCA's award schemes.

5.10.1 Membership

BCA Membership is split into 3 categories: Individuals, Groups and Associates.

5.10.2 Individuals

Individual Members join annually as either:

- Club Individual Members (CIMs)

- Club Individual Members Plus (CIM Plus)
- Direct Individual Members (DIMs)

Individual Members are represented on Council by four Individual Member Representatives.

All Individual Members (with the exception of the President and BCRA's Honorary Members) pay an annual fee. The individual membership process is handled by the Membership Administrator. Information on this process is on the Membership Processes pages.

5.10.3 Groups

There are 3 sub-categories of Group Members. Each Group Member has one vote in the Group Member "House" at General Meetings.

5.10.4 Clubs

Clubs join annually and pay a basic membership fee. They can then elect to "top this up" with various additional benefits, such as Speleology and BCRA Membership. The Club membership process is handled by the Membership Administrator. Information on this is on the Membership Processes pages.

Club Members are represented on Council by four Group Member Representatives.

5.10.5 Regional Councils

Regional Councils have their own Constitutions and run their own affairs. They carry out certain functions on behalf of BCA and are entitled to send a representative to Council, and all of Council's Standing Committees. They do not pay a fee to BCA and receive costs from BCA for much of their work. The BCA website has a full list of Regional Councils.

5.10.6 Constituent Bodies

Constituent Bodies have their own Constitutions and run their own affairs. They carry out certain functions on behalf of BCA and are entitled to send a representative to Council, and all of Council's Standing Committees. They do not pay a fee to BCA. The BCA website has a full list of Constituent Bodies.

5.10.7 Associates

Associate Membership is available for those Groups who are interested in BCA's activities and/or wish to support its aims and objectives, but who are not caving, mining-history clubs, or access-controlling bodies. Typically this includes: outdoor-activity service providers, commercial organisations and other "corporate" bodies.

Associates join annually and pay a basic membership fee, which includes all BCA's publications. The Associate membership process is handled by the Membership Administrator. Information on this is on the Membership Processes pages.

Associate Members are not entitled to vote at General Meetings.

5.11 Policies & Statements

5.11.1 Making or Amending Policy

BCA Policy is used to guide BCA in all its operations and, as such, is very important. Any new policy or changes to existing policy must, therefore, be ratified by the AGM, and only then following extensive consultation to ensure that the planned policy does not conflict with the complex layers of BCA's work.

The following is a suggested process that will help ensure successful Policy development:

1. **Definition of Purpose:** A clear definition of the purpose of the change, agreed by Council.
2. **Responsible Author:** A single named author should be appointed by Council, whose job it will be to consult as widely as possible.
3. **Draft prepared by Author:**
4. **Draft Circulated:** The Draft should be circulated as widely as possible, initially to BCA Executive, and then to all Council, Constituent Bodies, Regional Councils, Standing Committees and Working Groups with date for reply. This will usually be at least 6 weeks later.
5. **Further Drafts circulated as appropriate:** This should follow the process above.
6. **Ratification at Council:** The full document should be sent to the Secretary - and then circulated as for Draft Minutes at least 2 weeks prior to the Council meeting, and ideally more, to allow consultation.
7. **Ratification at AGM:**

5.11.2 Policies & Statements

BCA has the following Policies:

- Access
- Child Protection
- Conservation
- Disability & Discrimination
- Fixed Aids

BCA has the following Statements:

- Equity
- Participation

5.11.3 Access Policy

It is the stated primary aim of BCA (enshrined in part 3.1 of the Constitution), “to support members of the Association in obtaining, ensuring, maintaining and encouraging the development of access arrangements at a national, regional and club level in accordance with national, regional or club practice”. But it must be borne in mind that caves are situated under land. Both this land, and the land that most commonly has to be crossed to get from the public highway to the cave in question is owned by somebody.

Whether in any particular case the land in question in either of these two categories becomes “Access Land” (under the CRoW Act 2000), is really neither here nor there, because the law in England and Wales, (where CRoW operates), is quite clear. The owner of land is deemed to own everything down to the centre of the earth, so that he/she also owns the cave itself, and the CRoW Act does not alter this. It merely allows people to have access to certain land that they did not hitherto have, strictly “for the purposes of open-air recreation”.

In some respects this might at first appear to be unfortunate. On further thought it most probably is not so. Both cavers and landowners are most likely better served through the well-established cave access arrangements that are currently in place than would be the case under a free-for-all.

5.11.4 Child Protection Policy

BCA has a Child Protection Policy and also Child Protection Guidance for use by member clubs.

The Policy was last amended at the 2009 AGM.

5.11.5 Conservation Policy

BCA has an extensive Conservation Policy that can be purchased from BCA Publications Sales for £3.

5.11.6 Disability & Discrimination Policy

BCA offers its membership and services equally to all individuals regardless of sex, race, creed or religious conviction. It also offers its services through membership to caving clubs, mining history societies and all other allied organisations that are formally constituted with a constitution and/or objectives document that is not perceived to be in conflict with its own.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) came into full effect in October 2004. This does not mean that caving clubs should now be spending huge sums of money in order to make all corners of their establishments accessible to all. The operative word is “reasonable”. Actions should be reasonable bearing in mind all of the circumstances of the situation. Caving is not an activity that is ever going to attract wheelchair users or blind persons in large numbers. On the other hand there are many simple safety measures that can easily be carried out at most locations - that unnecessary step at the front door, or that huge threshold, or that dangerously-projecting worktop, for instance.

Positive ‘can do’ attitudes towards inclusion are possibly more important than concrete actions. For the larger clubs with premises, appoint a Disabilities Officer and ensure that he/she reviews matters on a regular basis.

5.11.7 Equity Statement

According to Section 4.7 of the BCA Constitution:

BCA will make its services available to all sections of the community and there will be no discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, creed, colour, occupation, religion or political opinion.

5.11.8 Fixed-Aids Policy

The aim of this policy is to improve safety and to provide guidance for those who place fixed aids. It is not the aim of this policy to make progress within a cave or mine easier.

The objectives of BCA under this policy are to enable the provision of fixed aids that are inspected regularly, and, where appropriate, testing, maintenance or replacement carried out. The number of fixed aids covered should be kept to a minimum, and where possible, alternatives should be considered. Where alternative routes are safe and reasonably practical, consideration should be given to the removal of existing fixed aids.

5.11.9 Participation Statement

BCA recognises that caving, cave diving and mine exploration are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

8. Working Groups

8.1 Overview

Working Groups are dealt with by 6.10 of the Constitution. They are set up by BCA Council, which should determine their terms of reference.

Working Groups should report to Council in writing at each meeting.

Their continued operation, and Convenors, shall be confirmed at the June Council meeting (directly following the AGM).

Current Working Groups are:

- National Cave Registry
- Radon Working Party
- Youth & Development

DRAFT