

British Caving Association

National Council meeting, 6 October 2018

Consolidated reports



British
Caving
Association

Secretary: Nick Williams
secretary@british-caving.org.uk

Meeting of the BCA National Council
at: The Red Lion Inn, Red Lion Street, Alvechurch, Birmingham, B48 7LG
on: Saturday 6th October 2018, commencing at 10:30 am.

Note about parking at the Red Lion: The pub car park is managed by a private subcontractor and vehicles parked for excessive periods or not using the pub may be fined. To avoid being fined please ensure that your vehicle reg. no. is on the list which will be circulated at the start of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Welcome
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Notice of items for Any Other Business
4. Minutes of last Council Meeting on 03.06.2018
Including: (4.1) Draft Minutes of AGM held 03.06.18 (for discussion only)
5. Matters Arising from the minutes of the last Council Meeting
Including: (5.1) Correspondence regarding minutes of the April 2018 Council meeting
(5.2) Action Log

Papers

6. Electronic voting - Will Burn
7. Remote meeting attendance - Tim Allen

Reports

8. Chairman - Les Williams
9. Secretary (Acting) - Nick Williams
Including: (9.1) Membership Administrator's Report – Wendy Williams
(9.2) Equality policy - Louise Baddeley
10. Treasurer (Acting) - Robin Weare
Including: (10.1) Insurance Manager's Report – Nick Williams
(10.2) CNCC proposals for regional funding
11. Conservation & Access Standing Committee - Andrew Hinde
12. CRoW Working Group - David Rose
13. Equipment & Techniques Standing Committee – Mark Sims
Including: (13.1) Rope Testing Officer - Bob Mehew
14. Publications & Information Standing Committee - Jane Allen
Including: (14.1) Media Liaison Officer - Andy Eavis
(14.2) Newsletter Editor's Report - David Rose
(14.3) Webmaster's Report - David Cooke
15. Training Standing Committee - Nigel Atkins

16. Qualifications Management Working Group – Stephan Natynczuk

Including: (16.1) QMC and Training Committee terms of reference – Alan Butcher

17. Youth & Development Standing Committee - Rostam Namaghi

18. Vision and Constitution Working Group - Hellie Adams

19. Cave Registry Working Group - Dave Cooke

20. IT Working Group – Dave Cooke

Including: (20.1) Award schemes database - Gethin Thomas

(20.2) Web services report - Dave Cooke

21. British Caving Library Rep - Jenny Potts

22. Safeguarding Officer - Chris Boardman

23. FSE Rep - Ged Champion

24. UIS Rep - Andy Eavis

25. Any Other Business

26. Date, Time & Place of subsequent meetings:

12th January 2019

13th April 2019

9th June 2019 (AGM)

Online Voting for BCA members

At the 2018 BCA AGM online voting for BCA members was discussed, and I volunteered to investigate this. I have obtained two quotes, which give a general idea of costs and also of the process of voting. There are a few issues which would need to be “ironed out” in terms of the constitution but also in terms of how a voted-for AGM would work.

From a first pass, it appears that to institute electronic voting within the BCA would be neither costly nor particularly onerous, although it would require investment, either of time, or money, or both. It would need several changes to the constitution; not really to its spirit but to its letter. This essentially involves removing sections that refer to voters being in person. I will not delve into constitutional minutiae here as it can be addressed by those with a keener eye when the time comes.

The effort might well be worth it, however, for the increase in participation. If 0.5% of the wider BCA membership engaged in online voting, this would effectively double the participation in BCA AGMs! (Numbers approximate, but you get the idea).

How it might work

I would propose a system where:

1. Motions and agenda are proposed before an AGM and circulated as widely as possible
2. If sufficiently keen, members might email/write/telephone input to the relevant proposer before the AGM
3. Discussed and amended at the actual AGM itself
4. Voted on afterwards online – after members have had the opportunity to read the minutes and possibly (In a futuristic vision of the BCA here) watch a recording of the AGM itself (maybe it could be live!).
5. Results are announced

Problems

In an email thread, there was discussion regarding people who may not be able to access electronic voting. An ONS report* found that 9 out of 10 houses now have internet access (although this is 6 out of 10 for single over 65s), which leaves the majority of BCA members probably able to access the internet, and for the rest, postal voting, or turning up at the AGM and voting at the end, should still be available (this is also a service offered by the companies quoted from below, should volunteers be deemed unwilling/unsuitable).

Another issue is availability and accuracy of members details, specifically email addresses. If members or club secretaries do not want to provide email addresses then postal voting or turning up in person to the AGM and voting at the end should still be available. Additionally, there is also a separate issue regarding members who have multiple memberships, multiple names, being a DIM and a CIM and other categories etc.

Membership database issues are a separate issue from the electronic voting system considered in this report, but I will mention that Experian will process databases of memberships to remove duplicates, check and validate addresses, and check against the deaths register if ever such a service is needed (this costs £1500). There may also be an issue of people buying multiple memberships and therefore multiple votes, but I would suggest that if anyone is sufficiently engaged in BCA matters to do this they should probably be recruited to council. Database issues should probably be discussed

at some point with the relevant people around (Do we really still need the DIM and CIM system or could club members just give their membership numbers to club secretaries to prove insurance... I will not digress too much!)

Quotes

UK engage

<https://www.uk-engage.org/>

£1200 per AGM – if on a yearly basis £1000 thereafter, based on an organisation of 5000 members. This is 24p per vote, then 20p thereafter.

All voting is done on their site, with vote codes (passwords) sent via email to members when the vote opens. This means they send out the emails to our membership -this is so that we cannot be accused of bias (only sending vote codes to certain demographics etc.)

This would mean we would need to have permission to share email addresses with a 3rd party – perhaps dealt with as an opt-in when renewing/gaining membership e.g “Would you like to vote in AGMs electronically? This means we share your email with our 3rd party voting provider, UK Engage”.

The price includes:

- The use of the platform hosted by them
- Their management of the vote e.g sending emails and dealing with it etc
- Email and telephone support for voters

Electoral Reform Services (ERS)

<https://www.electoralreform.co.uk/>

£800 per AGM minimum, price changes based upon how many things there are to vote on.

Otherwise roughly the same situation as the other provider, with similar levels of support.

Conclusion

An electronic voting system would take work but would be worthwhile in increasing participation. An increase in participation will make for a more effective organisation that better represents its members interests.

I propose that further consideration by council is given to this, and that the council aims to allow electronic voting in next years AGM (2019).

Will Burn

***ONS (2018) Internet access – households and individuals, Great Britain: 2018 available:**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2018>

Video conferencing for BCA council meetings

The 2018 BCA AGM passed the following motion.

“BCA to appoint or employ a technical advisor with a specific mandate to introduce an audio/visual technological solution which allows council members remote access to meetings. This access should allow members participation on a similar level as those attending in person. A working system should be in place within one year.”

I offered to progress this motion further on behalf of council but I do not have the technical knowledge to be considered the sort of advisor described in the motion. Nevertheless I have made a number of enquiries and I am able to offer council a first stage solution.

To avoid any confusion, there is no intention to replace the whole council meeting with a video conference, only to allow a number of individuals to attend the physical meeting by video. This is aimed at those who have a long way to travel, key personnel who are short on time for any variety of reasons, those who may only need to participate for a short period of time, etc. Other benefits of a video conference are recordings of the meeting so that key personnel who missed it can catch up on another day, displaying the agenda, documents and future presentations on screen. The overall aim is to modernise and offer more opportunity for members to participate with the organisation.

Some changes will be required to both the venue facilities and the way meetings are conducted in order to make maximum use of the technology. Video conferencing at BCA council meetings is entirely possible, but there does need to be the will from the executive, the IT group and the wider council members in order to make it happen.

The physical meeting location has previously been agreed as being centred around Alvechurch as I understand it. It is reasonably close for attendees from the Peak and Mendip but is much further to travel from the North, London, Devon and Cornwall, etc. No consideration seems to have been given to any representative from Scotland in the current equation.

It is possible that by adopting video participation the physical location will become less of a priority. What will need to change are the facilities of the meeting room. A large inter-active white board or screen will be required with modern IT facilities and at a suitable bandwidth. There is a large choice of meeting venues available and these can be accessed through a venue finding service such as Conferences-uk if necessary.

Currently the BCA subscribe to Cisco WebEx, an on-line meeting and video conferencing provider. Since September 2015 BCA has run 45 online meetings using this system, mostly for sub-committees, but as yet no attempt has been made to facilitate video conferencing at council meetings. In addition to WebEx other popular providers are 'Go To Meeting' and 'Zoom'. Assessing the best system to

suit the BCA needs should be re-evaluated. I am no expert in these matters but a system that uses the lowest bandwidths and other factors which allow wider usage for members, some of whom may have poor broadband coverage, would be the most beneficial. That balanced together with additional options, ease of use and user experience should drive the decision making.

The motion at the AGM set a time limit to have a working system in place within one year. That would be June 2019. The next stage, therefore, should be to trial a system at our next council meeting. Ideally this should be done at a more suitable venue, one used to hosting such a meeting, and with on-site technical support and advice. I am pleased to be able to announce that Spanset UK Ltd, sponsors of Eurospeleo and Hidden Earth, have agreed to host our 12th January Council meeting at their premises in Middlewich, Cheshire. Spanset have modern training rooms and boardroom facilities which are suitable for our needs. Spanset subscribe to 'Go To Meetings' so there could be the opportunity to see two systems in action. Pete Ward, Spanset MD, and key staff will be on hand to assist us. At lunchtime Pete has offered to give us all a guided tour of the factory and facilities. There is a short film on this link which has a few clips of the meeting rooms and gives an idea of the overall facilities.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=DCLeUemzsml

Spanset is located close to J18 of the M6. I appreciate this is a further drive for some but this move is to facilitate a controlled demonstration and not intended to be anything permanent. I am happy to act as liaison with Spanset to make this happen.

I propose therefore that "BCA take up Spanset's kind offer to hold the 12th January 2019 council meeting at their premises in Middlewich."

Tim Allen

BCA Council Meeting 6 October 2018

Agenda item 8 - Chairman's report

You can't have failed to notice the massive rescue effort in Thailand since we last met. The British effort was lead by the BCRC but BCA officers played a part too. The media and others hitting BCRC's website crashed BCA's servers and we had to temporarily move the site to its own server to take the pressure off all the other hosted sites. Various BCA Officers were fielding calls from the media trying to keep the pressure off those at the sharp end.

At Hidden Earth BCA also joined with BCRA to make a presentation to the UK divers for their excellent work in rescuing 17 people from the cave. An excellent effort with a superb outcome which I hope will never be needed again.

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We have a great deal of business to review at this meeting. I think we should accept that there may be too much to deal with in a single sitting. I am aware that there are several new and important initiatives in the proposals before us and I know their proposers will be keen for them to be approved but in several areas it would be better for the relevant standing committees to be re-vitalised and to consider the proposals before they come before Council for a final rubber stamping.

I am particularly wary that the general quality of discussion and the level of scrutiny of business tends to wane by mid afternoon. At the start of the meeting I think we should spend a few minutes to set a deadline for the end of the meeting and anything which is not concluded by that time and which cannot be remitted to one of our sub committees should be carried forward to January.

Les Williams
Chairman, BCA
4 October 2018

Agenda item 9. Ac. Hon Secretary's report to BCA Council 6 October 2018

1. Administrative Assistant

I regret to inform Council that Claire Peacey has resigned due to ill health. I hope to have her laptop and the audio recording equipment back from her in time for the meeting.

2. AGM Minutes

Unfortunately Claire was unable to properly complete the AGM minutes and I am very grateful to Andy Eavis who spent a great deal of time trying to make something out of the records which were available. I am also extremely grateful to Robin Weare who has done a sterling job of resurrecting the Action Log, and in helping me to prepare for this meeting in general.

The minutes are still far from satisfactory and we will need to discuss what is the best way to get these into an acceptable shape. They do not need to be ratified until June 2019 but I think we should aim to have a reasonably accurate set for review at our January meeting.

At this point I think it is also worth asking whether the minutes actually need to be a blow-by-blow record of what was said at the meeting, or if it would actually be more useful for the general gist of the conversation to be recorded, with the opportunity for people to request that a specific statement or position is recorded if they think this is necessary.

3. Liability Waivers

Will Burn and I have been working on a briefing paper for counsel's opinion on the topic of liability waivers, particularly as regards the liability for the safety of minors. I need to stress that Will has done most of the legwork on this and it is I who have been holding it up. Current status is that it needs a final review by me, followed by an agreement between myself and Will on some changes. Once this is done we propose to circulate it to others with a specific interest in this for their comment and development. We would welcome Council's view of how this should be carried forward.

4. Setting of subscriptions

This meeting will need to set the subscriptions for 2019, a matter which will be covered in the Treasurer's business. I have commented on the insurance aspects of this in my Insurance Manager's report but I recently had an exchange of e-mails with Estelle Sandford, who is Secretary of the Bristol Exploration Club,

which I think contains some feedback that we would do well to keep in mind in our discussion.

Estelle originally contacted me to ask if I could say what the CIM insurance contributions would be for 2019. I replied to say that, if implemented, the move to £10m cover would likely add about £1.50 to the non caving contribution and £2.00 to the caving contribution, although we may be able to cushion the implementation of the rise by dipping in to our reserves. Estelle replied:

Sadly I suspect we'd lose more of our 'armchair' non-cavers who remain members of clubs to keep in contact rather than using any facilities at all. We have quite a few members who only really want to receive our club journal and haven't visited the club premises or been to any caving event for years. These sort of people feel very strongly that the BCA insurance is just a tax on their membership and resent it already, so an increase is liable to reduce the membership! I wouldn't be at all surprised if we lose more active cavers too from the clubs as we are seeing more and more people in the Hunters who are not members of any club as there is a large number of caves you can do without joining a club and many of the online forums and Facebook do seem to be showing more and more of that trend.

My concern with all this is that most cavers believe that the 'BCA Insurance' portion of their membership is to cover public liability, so talking of initiatives such as the plans from Youth & Development being added to the BCA insurance does make it sound like it's being used like a bit of a 'cash cow' for other things. Are we using the wrong terminology by referring to it as 'BCA insurance' on our membership forms and website? Does it need to be rebranded to state more about it being a form of BCA membership? Do we need to be selling the benefits better? (in particular to non-cavers who do not see any purpose in it at all.)

I think there is an overall concern that the 'club scene' isn't what it was and that is not just caving world – it's very noticeable in the diving world too, that with online stuff, it's easy to access groups of people doing trips, boat spaces or pay charters, without paying to join a proper club. Also people seem to dabble with a lot of hobbies rather than just stick with the one main one which means they don't want to join a club for everything. One thing we really notice with the diving clubs it is it also quite hard to get a fair percentage of more recent membership in the last 10 years or so, to 'put something back' into the club, they feel they pay their subs and expect to just 'take' and go diving without helping out much - we're all volunteers at the end of the day so the few who do put something back are often run ragged by doing so and eventually some of those get peed off and leave! I'm in a BSAC club and I have to pay BSAC's membership as well as the club subs each year, but one thing I will say with the diving world is BSAC are continually sorting benefits such as discounts, etc. which they email regularly to advise us of.

The biggest thing we have to find a way to 'sell' is the club scene better and why it's still important to be part of that and with BCA wishing to take more money from the club memberships, I think it's important our membership have a full understanding of what benefits they are getting from that and what BCA are doing and that needs to be disseminated more through the clubs that join those people on their behalf and if it's not just 'BCA Insurance' as we state on memberships, we perhaps need to explain that a lot better.

Nick Williams
Acting Hon Secretary, BCA
4 October 2018

Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out the BCA's approach to equality and diversity in its membership and at its workplaces. The BCA is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the membership and enhance the way we work.
- 1.2 The BCA aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout, in the recruitment, training and development of members, and to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination

Equality and Diversity at the BCA

- 1.3 In the BCA, we consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups both in membership, and to services.
- 1.4 We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for the BCA too.
- 1.5 The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all members and others employed under a contract of service.
- 1.6 You have personal responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of your membership, you are expected to read and familiarise yourself with this policy, and ensure that this policy is properly observed.
- 1.7 This policy is also of particular relevance to those concerned with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and decisions which affect others.

The BCA's Commitment

- 1.8 Every member is entitled to an environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. The BCA will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against a member, trainer or other because of a protected characteristic:
- 1.9 Sex; gender identity or reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin); disability; sexual orientation; religion and/ or belief; and age.

- 1.10 All BCA members will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities in the BCA. Selection for position, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.
- 1.11 No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with a trusted member of the caving community such as a senior member of your caving club, a BCA committee member or any other member in a relevant position of seniority. You may decide in the alternative to raise the matter through the BCA's Harassment Policy or Grievance Policy.
- 1.12 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. The BCA will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by the BCA as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under BCA's Discipline Policy.
- 1.13 BCA members may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

Treasurer's Report Oct 2018

After the normal lengthy struggles with administrative requirements the bank mandates have been updated following the AGM. The signatories are now any two of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

Bills have been paid, the books are up to date and the 2017 corporation tax return has been completed and submitted to HMRC. There is no liability. Regional funding for 2017 has been agreed and paid to the regions which have submitted claims. The financial and accounting affairs of the association are in good shape.

The original budget for 2018 assumed a break-even situation. Adjusting that for the extra income from increased membership numbers and allowing for additional expenditure subsequently agreed by Council still leaves us at about break-even but we are now far enough into the year to allow me to say that there are areas where I expect expenditure to be below budget and as a result I now expect the 2018 accounts to show a surplus.

In this context I am sure that we are all grateful to the organisers of the NAMHO conference for their generosity in allowing us to hold our AGM during their event without cost to BCA.

There are two matters I would ask Council to consider

1. The constitution includes at sub section 10.3 that no council member shall receive payment in respect of work undertaken for the Association. Sub section 10.4 states that 10.3 shall not apply when the terms of such payment have been previously agreed by Council.

It has been the case that members of council who hold CIC qualifications have been paid at the normal rate by QMC (and previously Training Committee) for work they undertake as part of the training qualifications scheme. This continues and there are 3 members of Council who have been paid for such work in 2018. As I took over an equivalent situation when I became Treasurer I had assumed this to be covered by a blanket exception but on investigation have been unable to find this recorded in Council minutes. The recent decision of Training Committee to hold and pay directly for national training events expands the potential for such payments and I ask Council to consider the proposal which follows. It is made in order to be sure that a long existing situation is formalised.

Proposal

That sub section 10.3 of the Constitution shall not apply to members of Council who hold CIC qualifications and undertake work for the Association in the normal course of their professional activities.

2. I am delighted to report that a volunteer who perfectly fits the bill for a long term appointment as Treasurer has come forward. We have agreed between ourselves that, if Council approves, he will shadow the appointment for a period in the hope that he will not refuse to take it on at the 2019 AGM. I am expecting that he will attend the October Council meeting and am hoping that it will not put him off.

Proposal

That Howard Jones be co-opted as Assistant Treasurer

Howard is a recently retired qualified accountant who is relatively young (by my standards). He was previously Treasurer of Ghar Parau Foundation for many years.

2019 Budget

I have prepared a budget for 2019 and in doing so I have consulted with each budget holder to establish and incorporate their spending plans. In some cases I have made an additional allowance for items which experience tells me to expect. I have carefully reviewed those items we class as general overheads and made specific calculations where appropriate. In other cases I have based the budget expectation on past reality. All of this is part of the normal process.

There are some new items this year.

- The Youth & Development committee have prepared a specific and carefully costed 3 year plan which was discussed with me at length and presented to Council earlier in the year. I commend that approach. The plan envisages expenditure of £4,380 in 2019. However, I attended the session at Hidden Earth during which other quite exciting plans were discussed. None appear to be likely to cost a great deal and so, to allow some flexibility, I have included £5,400 in the draft budget.
- During 2018 Training Committee has set up and started to implement a national training scheme. I hope that the effect of this will be to increase the extent of recreational caver training without impacting on the long established process by which club training is supported by grants. I have allowed for Training Grants to continue at the level of recent years and added the requested amount to cover the new approach. This continues the level of expenditure approved by Council for the current year.
- The Safeguarding officer has indicated that he may find it beneficial to attend a specialist training course. Provision has been made for this and also for expenses should he need to visit clubs to provide advice.
- We have two new working groups. In both cases the draft budget has allowed for expenditure at the level requested. That is £500 for CRoW and £1,200 for the group which will consider the constitution.

Had Council not decided to give a similar sum to an unrelated organisation I would have been recommending at the June meeting that consideration be given to an increase of £1,000 in Expedition funding, which has remained unchanged at £5,000 since 2006. I now make that recommendation for 2019 and have included £6,000 in the budget. As with all other items this is subject to Council approval.

It is necessary to set the membership subscription rates for 2019 at this meeting and in the normal course of events I would recommend that they remain unchanged as, at this point, my best estimate is that income and expenditure would then be broadly equal.

However, before I make any recommendation I will remind Council that there was some discussion earlier in the year about increasing the insurance indemnity limit to £10 million. This was specifically to comply with the requirements of a single landowner. It has been established that if it is decided to make that change to the policy the cost will be £8,400 in 2019.

I understand that the Publications & Information Officer will be asking Council to approve changes to the role which will involve annual expenditure of around £10,000. Following the decisions to cease publication of the BCA Handbook and Speleology and to publish the newsletter online and then also by e-mail the role has not generated expenditure in recent years.

A report on electronic voting is to be tabled at this meeting. I understand that if the concept is approved the annual cost will be around £1,500.

There is a proposal to give free membership to cavers under the age of 18. Currently there are about 75 members in this category who are charged £8 per annum if a CIM. On the face of it that is a potential loss of £600 annual income. The point of the suggestion has to be that the effect of this would be to increase membership numbers. As any increase in membership numbers results in an increase in the insurance premium I must point out that the provision of free or below cost membership will lead to additional costs for all other members. My best estimate is that the current charge to students and under 18s reflects little more than the cost of insurance. If, for example, adoption of this proposal resulted in 500 young members it would cost around £4,000 plus the £600 referred to above. If the proposal to increase the indemnity limit to £10 million is adopted the cost of this proposal would be about £720 for existing members plus about £10 for each new one.

All of these proposals represent addition costs each year in the future and so must be covered by income. The only way to do that will be to increase subscriptions. Council will understand that as I write this I do not know whether all or any of these proposals will be approved, however, if Council decides to approve all of them I calculate that we will need to raise more than £20,000 each year in order to meet planned expenditure.

There are two other items of potential expenditure which I should bring to the attention of Council, although I see both items as being funded from reserves if approved.

The first is the provision of an online database for QMC. I understand that a report has been prepared but I have not seen it. However, the concept has been approved in principle and previous enquiries established a probable set up cost of between £5,000 & £10,000 and I assume that will come in 2019. It was then estimated by QMC that the effect would be to reduce their admin costs by more than the ongoing cost of the new system. If so, the set up costs will be recovered in time.

The other, and I hesitate to remind Council of the nightmare that is Ogof Draenen, relates to the damage to the site of an ancient monument by unknown cavers.

I understand that, although CADW is likely to contribute substantially to the cost of reinstating the damaged area they will be sending a bill for the balance to the landowner. I have heard various amounts quoted ranging from £6,000 upwards.

From what I understand of the circumstances I cannot be sure that should an application from Cambrian reach Finance Committee there would be a decision that it meets the definition set out in the funding rules

In my opinion it should be paid by the individuals who did the damage and by those who publicly supported activities which were outside the scope of the access agreement.

As a realist I have to accept that neither is likely.

In those circumstances I hope Council will agree that it would be very wrong to expect a landowner who generously allows cavers access to a cave on his land to pay for damage caused by their actions. I propose that, in the hope of retrieving at least some of the damage to the reputation of cavers caused by this sorry saga, we agree to offer to indemnify the landowner.

Robin Weare

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION
DRAFT BUDGET 2019

	2017 Actual £	2019 Budget £	
Subscriptions			
<i>Income</i>			
Subscriptions	102,260	102,000	Current numbers & rates
<i>Total</i>	<u>102,260</u>	<u>102,000</u>	
<i>Expenditure</i>			
Premium	38,722	40,000	
Employment Expenses	9,494	10,500	
General Expenses	3,651	5,000	
Possible extra premium	0	8,400	Council to decide
<i>Total</i>	<u>51,867</u>	<u>63,900</u>	
Association			
<i>Income</i>			
Interest	2,665	2,700	
Broker Commission	0	0	
Donations, Sundry	120	0	
<i>Total</i>	<u>2,785</u>	<u>2,700</u>	
<i>Expenditure</i>			
Secretarial	1,127	3,000	
Advertising	3,024	3,000	
Travel	2,575	2,600	
Subscriptions	1,050	1,000	
Insurance	495	600	
Ballot	1,511	0	
Electronic Voting	0	1,500	Council to decide
Webex and Sundry	1,817	1,800	
<i>Total</i>	<u>11,599</u>	<u>13,500</u>	
Conservation & Access			
<i>Expenditure</i>			
Publications	0	500	Reprint of MIC leaflet
Travel & Sundry	0	250	
CRoW	221	500	
<i>Total</i>	<u>221</u>	<u>1,250</u>	

Qualifications Scheme

Income

LCMLA / CIC Schemes	9,460	21,500	Assumed break even - mix irrelevant
Revalidation Courses	9,593		
Trainer/Assessor Fees	2,755		
<i>Total</i>	<u>21,808</u>	<u>21,500</u>	

Expenditure

Employment Expenses	7,574	
General Expenses	3,160	
Travel	1,804	
LCMLA/CIC Training	7,131	
<i>Total</i>	<u>19,669</u>	<u>21,500</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>2,139</u>	<u>0</u>

Caver Training

Expenditure

Recreational Caver Training	1,125	4,000
Voluntary Sector Support	65	100
<i>Total</i>	<u>1,190</u>	<u>4,100</u>

Publications & Information

Expenditure

Unspecified	0	10,000	Council to decide
Travel	0	0	
Leaflets & Publications	0	0	
National Cave Registry	0	0	
<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>10,000</u>	

Equipment & Techniques

Expenditure

Travel	0	0
Anchor programme	2,944	3,000
Rope-Test programme	38	250
<i>Total</i>	<u>2,982</u>	<u>3,250</u>

Constitution Working Group

Expenditure

Travel & meetings	0	1,200
Total	<u>0</u>	<u>1,200</u>

Youth Development

Expenditure

Kit loan scheme	0	3,180
Under 18's campaign	0	200
Venue hire	0	500
Club outreach scheme	0	500
Other	120	1,020
Total	<u>120</u>	<u>5,400</u>

Meetings & Conferences

Expenditure

AGM Weekend	114	500 Net Cost
Artificial Cave	60	150
Cliff Hanger	0	0 Now ceased
Total	<u>174</u>	<u>650</u>

Web Services

Income

Web Services	1,553	1,250
Total	<u>1,553</u>	<u>1,250</u>

Expenditure

Web Services	1,724	1,500
Total	<u>1,724</u>	<u>1,500</u>

Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>(171)</u>	<u>(250)</u>
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Regional Caving Council Expenditure

Expenditure

CCC claims	235	
CNCC claims	481	
CSCC claims	1,064	
DCA claims	1,534	
DCUC claims	50	
Total	<u>3,364</u>	<u>5,000</u>

British Caving Library

Expenditure

Grant	10,000	10,000
Total	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>

Expedition Programme

Expenditure

Grants	5,000	6,000
<i>Total</i>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>6,000</u>

International

Expenditure

Grants to Reps.	216	350
<i>Total</i>	<u>216</u>	<u>350</u>

Safeguarding

Expenditure

Training course	0	420
Travel & DBS Checks	0	180
<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>600</u>

<i>Total Income</i>	<u>130,756</u>	<u>127,450</u>
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<i>Total Expenditure</i>	<u>110,476</u>	<u>148,200</u>
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<i>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</i>	<u>20,280</u>	<u>(20,750)</u>
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<i>Tax</i>	<i>Prior Year Adjustment</i>	(193)	0
	<i>Current Year</i>	0	0
		<u>(193)</u>	<u>0</u>

<i>Total Surplus / (Deficit) less Tax</i>	<u>20,473</u>	<u>(20,750)</u>
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10.1 Insurance Manager's report to BCA Council Meeting 06 Oct 18

1. Insurance Manager

I am pleased to report that Howard Jones has approached me and offered to take over the insurance portfolio with effect from 1 January 2019. I have had a long chat with him about what the role entails and his approach to managing the PL scheme, and I am confident that he can efficiently take up where I leave off.

As reported elsewhere, it is likely that Howard will take over from Robin as Treasurer and I think it makes good sense for both these roles to be undertaken by one person.

Howard is currently shadowing me and will be involved in the 2018 PL renewal meeting in December. He has also been of great assistance in the renewal of the all risks business policy.

2. 'All risks' renewal

The 'All Risks' commercial policy which provides cover for (among other things) theft of or damage to BCA and BCRA property has now been renewed. A brief report from Howard is attached.

3. PL cover for minors

The PL policy has no lower (or upper) age limits. In connection with the Y+D proposal to abolish membership fees for minors, I approached the insurer and asked if they would be prepared to waive the 'per capita' premium for BCA members under age 18. They were not willing to do this, citing a number of reasons:

- It could potentially increase the number of cavers, without increasing the risk premium.
- It could make a parent and/or under 18 less "aware" of their duty of care responsibility, because something was provided for nothing (as we have seen with other National Governing Bodies).
- Whilst insurers agree very few minors have claims made against them, it does transfer liability to the person(s) considered to be responsible for their actions.

It is also worth noting the comment from Howdens: *"Please do not ever be afraid to ask something like that, it keeps insurers on their toes!"*

4. PL scheme limit of indemnity

We rehearsed the arguments for moving from £5m limit of indemnity to £10 at the Council meeting in April and I do not intend to repeat them here. My Secretary's report contains some feedback on proposals to increase subscriptions. I have appended a note from Howard who has a particular perspective. Howden's comment is *"Due to a number of issues such as the ever-litigious society we live in and the recent change in the Discount Rate implemented by Government, we are recommending to our clients more and more about a £10m limit of indemnity. In my professional opinion due consideration should always be given to increasing the limit of indemnity to £10m."*

The additional cost of moving the whole policy from £5m to £10m will be £8,400 including IPT.

I also enquired about whether it is possible to increase the limit of indemnity for just one site/landowner and have received a positive response. Using Longleat Estates as an example, the additional annual premium for this would be in the region of £400 per year.

Nick Williams
2 October 2019

BCA Office and computer and other insurance renewal 1/10/18

Executive summary:

3 minor insurance policies were renewed as at 1/10/18 at small inflationary cost increases. Total premium cost is some £1,200.

Detail:

As part of a potential succession of Howard Jones to Nick Williams as BCA Insurance officer, HJJ was asked to renew the 3 minor policies. (Note the main PL policy renews 1/1/2019 and meetings are already arranged to discuss.)

The three policies are:

Office insurance:

Broker Anderson Ashcroft Insurance Brokers (Preston)

Underwriter QBE

Policy reference QBE00011226OFF

Main items covered are employees (legal requirement) some office assets and cash for HE annual conference.

Computer insurance:

Broker Anderson Ashcroft Insurance Brokers (Preston)

Underwriter NMU

Policy reference COMO21330203

Main items covered are computer hardware

Engineering all risks plant and equipment:

Broker Anderson Ashcroft Insurance Brokers (Preston)

Underwriter NMU

Policy reference CPL021330413

Main items covered are the artificial cave and trailer.

Various values were challenged and altered after advice from Nick and Robin Weare. Cyber cover was queried and the response is still outstanding.

A quote to cover the BCRA library assets is also outstanding.

HJJ 2/10/18

Proposal to increase BCA PL cover from £5m to £10m

Public liability insurance is designed for those who interact with customers or members of the **public**. It protects against claims of personal injury or property damage that a **third party** suffers (or claims to have suffered) as a result of your activities.

BCA has an insurance scheme which has £5m cover for all members. It also covers landowners and forms a central plank of many cave and mine access agreements.

10 years ago £1m PL cover was thought to be sufficient for most purposes, but claims experience has pushed the value ever upwards. My recent work experience was that £5m for 1 incident involving 1 person would have been insufficient (we had £10m cover and have since moved to £20m at minimal extra cost)

We had a 20 year old contractor working in a forest. He was maimed in an incident. Had he been killed the claim would have been circa £2m (40 years lost income at £30k per annum plus inflation and add ons).

However as he was maimed there is a chance that he will need care for the rest of his life, so on top of the above would go the cost of that care. The current reserve for the incident is £6m.

We had pairs of contractors working together regularly so had they both been injured then 2 times £6m would have meant our policy could not respond in full, hence our increase from £10m to £20m. The extra premium cost was 3%, as the underlying risk had not changed.

I would therefore propose BCA increase the cover in their policy from £5m to £10m.

Howard Jones 25/9/18

The CNCC request a review of the BCA funding of Regional Councils. We offer a number of observations and proposals on the current rules which were adopted 6th October 2012.

Background: At BCA council meetings earlier this year our attention was drawn to the regional settlement funding figures and the discussions which have followed. This had led to careful consideration of the current funding rules and whether they meet the needs of regional councils going forward. In our case particularly, the outside funding routes we previously enjoyed have now dried up.

In our regional council, attitudes and priorities have changed in recent years. CNCC is committed to working for the benefit of all cavers. Matters of access, conservation funding, and information dissemination have changed considerably at CNCC and we'd like to propose some changes to the regional funding rules to reflect this.

We believe changes to regional funding priorities are a matter for council and not, as suggested at the June meeting, for the Finance Committee alone.

Our observations: There are two main principles which guide the Finance Committee (FC). The first is "to ensure the funding is spent for the benefit of all BCA members". This is a fine ideal for a club but does not reflect the fact that BCA is also the national governing body for all those who wish to venture underground. Interpretation should therefore take the longer term view where short term spending can ultimately benefit all cavers. In any case this principle is contradicted twice in the document where access and anchor funding supports clubs but not individual members of BCA. It is very difficult to judge whether this principle has been met as written and we would suggest that the principle is broadened so long as it conforms to the relevant aims and principles of the BCA constitution.

The second principle of ensuring that "best value for money has been achieved" appears to be sensible although difficult to determine how this is judged.

We propose regional council funding rules are reviewed as soon as possible adopting the further proposals and suggestions included in this document.

It seems sensible that the responsibilities, the funding process, timings and presentation of accounts are set by the FC and approved by council. There is very limited information on the FC available to members and it is not listed as a committee on the BCA web site or handbook and this should be corrected. We do note from responses to our own enquiries that regional councils submit their own scrutinised accounts in different forms. These then appear to be taken on trust by the FC and there is no obvious process to ensure the actual rules have been complied with. Who can determine that a funded gate or a funded anchor placement complies with the first principle?

We would like to see some definition on the rule of, “where there are other external sources of funding, these should be used first.” This should not discourage regional councils from holding their own reserves or spending alternatively sourced funds on other projects. Where BCA funding applies to one it should apply to all.

Following the major changes to the national council in 2004 it is important that BCA continues to fund the **administration** of the regional councils in terms of all running costs. We do not necessarily agree that some admin costs are pro-rata'd according to membership type. This seems to only effect DCA and CSCC who presumably have regional members who are not members of BCA. Even though this does not apply to our region at present we presume having these non-member groups are beneficial to those regions and they should therefore be supported especially as these 'non-core' costs seem to be minimal.

Publications, information and general communication is essential for healthy regional caving and of benefit to all cavers in the longer term. In our view this should be encouraged by national association funding. At present, the opposite is the norm where non allowance of funding discourages these lines of communication. We propose *that council gives broad approval to fund regional council newsletters and other forms of disseminating regional information subject to specific approval by the P&I Officer or P&I group.*

Websites are essential for passing on information to local and visiting cavers alike. At present BCA funding support is limited to those sites which utilise BCA's own web services. This is unnecessarily restrictive especially in light of the web service security issues that have been brought up before council. We propose *that BCA funds all regional council website costs regardless of who provides the services and hosting.*

Promoting caving, both to attract new people into the sport and to inform the wider community is beneficial to all especially the membership health of BCA. Specific initiatives should be funded by BCA subject to prior application and approval by P&I.

Under the **Conservation & Access** heading BCA allows regional council funding to an annual total of £500, paid according to the account and to remove the bureaucracy of day to day C&A work. Above that total, expenditure should be presented as a 'project' or 'parcel of work'. A decision whether to fund the project is then made by the Finance Committee. Surely this is wrong. Approval and decisions over C&A 'projects' should be made by the C&A committee who have the appropriate experience and knowledge in these matters. We would therefore propose *that above the £500 allowance any expenditure which meets the criteria for a 'project' should be approved by C&A first.* This will ensure that the project is judged against the principles and value for money. More importantly it will also allow for regional dialogue and the sharing of ideas.

After several months and numerous enquiries it has been difficult to find information on the process and detail of regional funding reimbursements by BCA. We would recommend that all regional accounts that receive BCA funding be made available in a central place. Decisions made to grant or reject additional funding applications should be recorded. Moving decision making from the FC to P&I and C&A should ensure better public recording through reports to council and standing committee minutes. Greater transparency should always be the aim.

Conservation & Access Officer report to October 2018 Council meeting.

Natural England consultation on SSSI bye laws.

The Conservation and Access committee have produced and submitted a response to this consultation which may be found in the appendix. The main objective of this exercise is to have the BCA recognised as an appropriate consultee in relation to Sites of Special Scientific Interest. We alerted NE to some areas where their proposals might infringe on “normal caving activity” if taken literally. But in general there was support for the bye laws in their attempt to deal with repeated low level anti- social behaviour on designated sites.

Minimal Impact Caving Guidelines Leaflets.

I have ordered another print run of 2000 leaflets at a cost of £212.00 plus VAT. Unfortunately they did not arrive in time for Hidden Earth. They will hopefully be ready for distribution at the Council Meeting for anyone who would like to take some back to their regional club huts and hostelrys.

Andrew Hinde
C&A Convenor September 2018.



Our ref. 18D1462

14 August 2018

Natural England,
Suite D,
Unex House,
Bourges Boulevard,
Peterborough
PE1 1NG

FAO Mina Patel

Dear Sirs,

Response by the British Caving Association to the Consultation on *"The proposed scope and application of Natural England's SSSI byelaw-making powers"*

1. The British Caving Association (BCA) is the recognised national body representing cavers in the United Kingdom. BCA has considered Natural England's (NE) proposals and has the following responses.

Question 1: proposed Operational Principles

2. BCA considers the proposed Operational Principles are a reasonable set of principles but have one concern. Principle 5 confirms an intent to consult with stakeholders. We would like to see national or regional bodies of organisations with interests in the specified features included in the SSSI citation explicitly included in this list to ensure adequate consultation.

Question 2: draft model byelaws

3. BCA notes that the as drafted byelaws 2.1, 2.2, 2.6, 2.31, 2.32, 2.37 and 2.42 all could potentially apply to cave related activities. BCA is concerned that as drafted, the prohibitions would apply to activities totally unrelated to preserving the features specified in the citation. (As a simple example, draft byelaw 2.31 targeting noise making equipment would stop the use of radiolocation equipment, an important scientific tool.)
4. BCA is also concerned that as drafted, such byelaws could be beyond the powers provided in Section 28R in their blanket coverage. (As a simple example, the blanket draft byelaw 2.6 on removing or displacing soil for say protecting floral features specified in the citation would also appear to cover removing or displacing soil in cave which is not so specified in the citation.)

Continued over / page 1

5. BCA is very concerned that the draft byelaw 5 whilst not interfering with persons carrying out their lawful duties such as constables, does not extend to cover those persons to whom the police has delegated responsibility to perform certain actions. This notably could impede voluntary rescue teams from rescuing people.

Question 3: additional practical measures

6. BCA agrees with NE statement at para 5.9 that one significant pre byelaw step would be to erect signs indicating the significance of certain features on a SSSI and thus the need to take precautions to avoid damaging them. After all most people will comply if they know what they're meant to be doing and why one should do it. BCA would however wish to see that the consultation exercise contains a justification for the proposed byelaw which includes outlining previous steps (such as posting signs) taken.
7. BCA is concerned that NE has decided to exclude itself from holding in house competencies to undertake the monitoring of the condition of a SSSI cited geological or physiographical feature in caves. BCA notes that NE has declared the use of "*appropriately qualified contractors, subject to available budget*" (our emphasis). BCA therefore seeks assurances that NE will make budgetary resources available. Else the whole concept of SSSIs becomes valueless.

Supplementary Comments

8. BCA notes that the citations of many SSSIs contain relatively vague information on the "geological or physiographical features" in the citation which form the basis for the designation of the SSSI. For example one citation just uses the word 'cave' without specifying what features of the cave are of significance. BCA is therefore concerned about the legal basis on which a byelaw might rest in respect of protecting some feature of a cave not clearly caught by the citation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any clarification of the above comments.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Williams', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nick Williams
Hon. Secretary

For and on behalf of the British Caving Association

From: David Rose via Council-list council-list@british-caving.org.uk
Subject: [BCA Council] CROW convenor's report
Date: 19 September 2018 at 17:20
To: David Rose via Council-list council-list@british-caving.org.uk
Cc: Robert Mehew [REDACTED], Stuart France [REDACTED]



As mandated by the AGM, I have gathered a small group to continue with the work of the CROW campaign.

It consists of:

Tim Allen, former BCA CROW liaison officer
Jenny Potts, DCA
Stuart France, Cambrian Caving Council access officer
Bob Mehew

And me.

We are planning to hold a meeting in early November with senior staff at the BMC in Manchester to discuss enlisting the BMC's support for the campaign, and to seek their advice.

Now that the group is up and running, I propose to concentrate initially on lobbying at the national political level. The ultimate goal is to seek a meeting with the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, in an attempt to persuade him that his department and Natural England should revisit the legal advice which led to their insisting that caves do not come with the scope of CROW. We shall see how this phase of the campaign goes, and have a re-think if we don't get anywhere. This activity will commence as soon as Parliament sits again after the party conference season.

David

Council-list mailing list
Council-list@british-caving.org.uk
http://british-caving.org.uk/mailman/listinfo/council-list_british-caving.org.uk

Equipment & Techniques Officer report to October 2018 council meeting

It is a shame that due to some communication problems I was not aware of this meeting earlier, so I should first apologise for my absence from the meeting.

Unfortunately, due to health problems recently, progress on the E&T front has been much slower than intended but I am hopeful that will change over the coming months.

Ongoing projects within the group include investigating new resin anchors (Climbing Technology “Glue-in anchor”) for potential adoption into the anchor scheme, further testing of BP anchors of different types, investigating resin shrinkage in view of a few loose anchors being reported to some of the regional councils, guidelines/advice on loose anchors, updating anchor installation record-keeping, and testing of concrete screws. Once conclusions are reached in any of these projects they will be reported to Council. I am happy to provide further details of any of these projects if requested, but have refrained from doing so here in the interests of keeping my report concise

One discussion at our last meeting which is of particular relevance to council is summarised in the proposal from the E&T group below:

It has been on the E&T group agenda for a while to discuss whether the CNCC should be reimbursed by the BCA for IC anchor purchases to the value of the BP anchor, or whether they should be reimbursed to their full cost. The total cost to the CNCC was £3900.00 (£6 per anchor), and the same number of BP anchors would cost £2502.5 (£3.85 per anchor), the difference coming to £1,397.50. After discussing this issue at the last meeting, it was agreed within the group that the development, use and purchase of IC anchors by the CNCC resolved a significant issue for the BCA when no suitable anchors were available under the scheme. We therefore recommend that the BCA reimburse the CNCC to the full cost of the anchors. It was also noted that anchors do not just benefit northern cavers, but anyone visiting the region (c.f. the funding agreed for the CSCC for the purchase of new locks at the Council meeting in April).

Mark Sims

E&T Convenor

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [BCA Council] Agenda items and reports for meeting on Oct. 6th.
Date: 24 September 2018 at 19:39
To: Nick Williams [REDACTED]
Cc: Mark Sims [REDACTED]

RM

Hi

Nothing to report on Rope Testing.

Bob

From: Council-list <council-list-bounces@british-caving.org.uk> **On Behalf Of** Nick Williams
via Council-list
Sent: 24 September 2018 19:12
To: BCA Council <council-list@british-caving.org.uk>
Subject: [BCA Council] Agenda items and reports for meeting on Oct. 6th.

The next National Council meeting will be held on 6th October in Alvechurch.

Please can all officers ensure their report reaches me by no later than 23:59 on Monday 1 October. Reports received after this time may not be included in the documents pack which I will aim to publish no later than the morning of Thursday 4th October.

Thank you

Nick.

Nick Williams
Acting Secretary
Tel. +[REDACTED]
[email: \[REDACTED\]](mailto:[REDACTED])

British Caving Association
The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, Buxton, SK17 8RG England
Tel. +44 1298 873810, www.british-caving.org.uk

Report from Publications & Information Officer

At the June 2018 BCA AGM I was voted in as P&I Officer. Before the vote I explained the following:

- I believe the BCA needs to better promote itself as an organisation to the wider caving community. Ensure cavers know what it actually does and why BCA is relevant to them.
- In order to encourage more people to caving, the BCA should improve its promotion of our sport to a wider audience, not just within the caving community itself – we know caving's great.
- In order to help achieve the above, the BCA needs a 'PR/Marketing' role. My background is sales, marketing, PR and Social media I explained I would take on the role of P&I Officer with a view to defining the role as including PR and Marketing.

Thank you to all those present who voted for me.

Like it or not, the modern world is online. The way cavers (particularly younger ones) communicate, search and share information has changed and continues to do so at a rapid rate.



The BCA therefore needs (amongst other means of communication) a strong presence online, which includes a modern website and active social media pages.

The age demographic of cavers is old (see attached or link below). If new cavers aren't encouraged to our sport there will be little point in having £100,000's in the BCA coffers as in the coming years there won't be many active cavers to spend it on - Let's invest now for the future!

See Annex 4 P15 of June 2017 council minutes

http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=about:documents:council_meetings:council_minutes_2017-06-11.pdf

The Website

The current BCA website needs updating, particularly it's 'look', with a fresh design, inspiring photography, easy to navigate pages and an overhaul of the information contained within it.

There are two major aspects to the BCA web site, the appearance and the content.

I propose the website is redesigned though won't go into details here as would be far too complicated. A redesign would be an ideal opportunity to decide what outdated information could be removed and what new information needs to be added ensuring the BCA website is modern and relevant to today's caver.

For examples of website that inspire, inform and are easy to navigate:

<https://cncc.org.uk> and www.newtocaving.com

This is of course a huge undertaking and I believe should be outsourced to a professional website designer. It's too much to ask for this amount of work to be done quickly and for free by a volunteer. Cookie has done a huge amount of work on IT (and no doubt much else) for BCA and I'm sure everyone would join me in thanking him for these continued efforts. Is now not the time to help Cookie with this large workload?

I propose we ask a professional website designer to quote for designing a new BCA website and set aside a budget of £5K so we can make a start. From experience I know website design can cost many £1000's and take months to complete – I expect the finished website to cost more than £5K however believe a start should be made as soon as possible.

As part of the redesign, BCA could do with a new logo – the current one has been around for decades and it's time for a new modern image ☺

A leaflet for beginners – an excellent way for BCA to reach out to potential new cavers

A redesign of the 'So you want to go caving' leaflet if required. This leaflet could be printed by the 1000's and given free to show caves, relevant tourist centres, climbing walls, student clubs for freshers weeks, Scout Groups etc to help inspire new people to our sport. As the BCA has already adopted www.newtocaving.com, basing the leaflet on this website makes sense. Efforts have already been made to place NTC posters in suitable locations – more help doing this would be appreciated - <https://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?topic=23740.0>



A typical caving club stand at a Freshers Fair – I missed the opportunity to try and get posters to the student clubs, though they were given out at CHECC last year. Leaflets would be useful on these stands and maybe BCA could provide more help? These clubs bring many new cavers to the sport so should be supported. Could Y&D help with this?

Before finalising the leaflet design the new BCA logo would be required. Dan at Tor Studios who designed the NTC website could design a logo and leaflet for approval. I would like to get this process started and propose a budget of £1000 for logo/leaflet design and an initial print run once the design has been approved.

Alternatively, we could ask the wider caving community to design a logo – maybe a competition over social media for ideas?

The BCA Newsletter.

Sign up to this excellent source of information needs to improve – currently only 8% of members have signed up to receive the newsletter!

Could copies not be printed and sent out to clubs etc as with the excellent CNCC newsletter? The world may be online, however there is still a place for a newsletter being read with a brew in the clubhouse common room – an excellent way for the BCA to promote its work to cavers.

I am happy to conduct an 'online campaign' to encourage sign up.

I support the suggestions made by the CNCC regarding newsletter funding. Associations need to interact with their memberships and newsletters are an excellent way of doing this.

Media Liaison

I would like to be copied into the e-mails/telephone contacts received by the Media Liaison Officer so I can spot any potential opportunities for positive PR for caving. Also, should another 'Thai Rescue' event occur, it's too much work for one person to contend with as the world's media comes knocking.

BCA Publications, Advice Notices and Information

Some of the notices listed on the current BCA website are outdated – I propose I go through them and suggest what could be removed/archived/updated.

Of the current and relevant publications – Minimum Impact Guidelines, Weil's disease information for example – what is being done with this other than being on the website? Are new notices required – safeguarding advice for 18's etc for example?

P&I Standing Committee

The P&I is a standing Committee though as I understand it hasn't met for a considerable time? Who would like to be a part of this committee as I would like to establish a group to help with the above work?

Ukcaving.com – conflict of interest or an opportunity.

Yes I own and run ukcaving.com with my husband, Tim Allen. The forum and its associated facebook/twitter pages reach many 1000's of cavers every week. It's run on a not for profit basis with all advertising revenue used to either pay for IT support and hosting or invested back into caving. For example UKC supports Summer expeditions with rope sponsorship and the CHECC 'Grand Prize'. It also provides a valuable resource for cavers with over 14 years of searchable information available.

We bought the forum 5 years ago as it had a poor reputation and needed improving. After much work the forum is now a more positive place.

UKC is a media platform, just like facebook is or Descent and has dedicated pages for BCA/BCRA/Hidden Earth which are free to use. 1000's of cavers can be reached simply by posting. I propose members of BCA committees use the dedicated boards on the forum to help promote BCA and it's work to cavers.

I understand some believe BCA should run UKC, however I know from experience the amount of time and effort it takes to run such an active forum. Does BCA currently have the spare volunteer capacity to run UKC? Why not make use of the volunteer hours already being put in by the team at UKC?

Facebook

I am now an admin on the BCA facebook page however would like guidance on how much BCA would like me to post – I could do much more. I'm already running the UKC page so to add BCA wouldn't be much extra effort.

A thought – facebook is a social media platform as is UKC. Why would BCA support facebook but not UKC? One is owned by billionaires, run for profit and cares not one jot about cavers, caving or caves the other is the polar opposite ☺ - use both.

Descent and other advertising

I am told BCA have been spending a not insignificant amount on advertising with Descent. Descent is an important caving publication and I see no reason why BCA shouldn't continue to advertise in the magazine however I propose advert content and budget spend should be reviewed and organised by the P&I committee going forward as should all advertising.

What message do BCA want to put across? Who do they want to reach? How will they do this – Descent, facebook, UKC, newsletters, Hidden Earth, other? Cavers will use all or some of the channels listed, BCA should engage with them all.

£3K is in the draft 2019 budget for advertising. I propose this is increased to £4K but comes within the £10K P&I budget.



What about sponsoring the 'Underground Session' at Kendal Mountain Festival in 2019 and help to promote New to Caving, a website dedicated to encouraging new people to our sport? An ideal opportunity to reach an 'adventurous' audience.

Hidden Earth – what is its relation to BCA?

The annual caving conference is one of the most important events in the caving calendar. A chance for cavers from all over the country to meet up and an ideal opportunity for BCA to promote itself and its work to cavers hence why I mention it here.

I believe it's unclear to many cavers what the connection is between BCA and Hidden Earth. If HE is ultimately run/funded by BCA (through BCRA) consider renaming HE to include BCA in the title.

Could BCA not help Hidden Earth out with its struggle to find a decent venue, particularly one up North by offering funding? If suitable locations are being dismissed partly due to cost, couldn't BCA offer to help pay towards a better venue?

BCA should have a stand at Hidden Earth, reach out to cavers, ask their opinions, share information, promote the organisation's work. An interesting and engaging stand worth visiting would be ideal.

My apologies if the above report asks more questions than it answers, however I have to start somewhere. I'm hoping following positive discussion at the council meeting on the 6th October and with support from my fellow council members we can begin the process of better promoting BCA to the cavers of today and of promoting caving to the new cavers of tomorrow.

Age demographic report of BCA membership to June 2017 Council Meeting.

It is of concern that there appear to be less active cavers about. It is noticeable in the once hotspot areas of the Yorkshire Dales for instance. BCA pointed to the relative consistency of annual membership renewals, so what could be happening here? Perhaps the membership is ageing and becoming less active. If older members leave and are not replaced by sufficient numbers of younger cavers this can have consequences for BCA in achieving less income and fewer 'human' resources to take on the roles of running the organisation. I suggested BCA collect 'date of birth' data at membership renewal to find the age demographic of the current membership. Council decided it could only ask for 'year of birth' (YOB) on a voluntary basis. That data has been passed on to me and with some input from a retired statistician I am able to offer the following report.

2270 members returned credible YOB data out of a total of 4942. A small number of entries were removed from the sample which gave ages over life expectancy or were not actually a YOB.

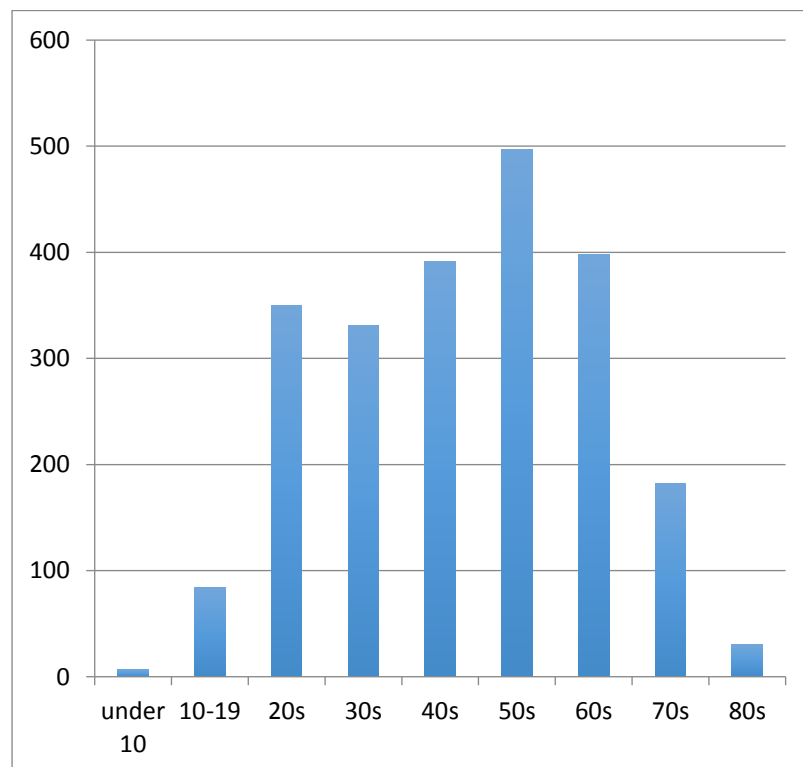
The sample size is adequate. The question is whether it is representative of the membership. There may be age bias in whether members chose to respond to the request for YOB. Never the less it is all we have to go on.

There are considerably more members in their 50s than in their 20s and 30s.

The median age is 49 – nearly half the membership is 50 or over.

18% of the membership is over 65.

The BCA has an 'old' population. Overall BCA membership numbers are likely to fall unless 20 and 30 year olds can be increased by around 40%.



Tim Allen

June 2017

BCA Media Liaison Officer's Report for Council Meeting Saturday 6th October

The major media event since the last council meeting has of course been the cave diving rescue in Thailand. This is possibly the biggest caving media event ever and probably the most successful.

Obviously in the main media firing line were the British Cave Rescue and I tried to work with them to take away as much of the non-specific rescue queries as possible. Emma Porter and Peter Dennis were clearly overwhelmed, and ultimately, we came up with a list of people to pass media requests onto; both within British Cave Rescue, British Cave Diving Group and British Caving Association.

For much of the media frenzy I was away from my office and passed on enquires to others, particularly Jane Allen who handled some herself and passed others onto appropriate people.

I personally tried to talk only about how wonderful caving was and avoid specific answers to questions on the detail of the rescue. Interestingly, media all over the world were quite interested in this. I think overall the situation was handled by cavers reasonably well.

There have been suggestions to set up more of a permanent structure to handle this sort of thing. However, in my opinion, the last time a media event like this occurred was Moss Dale 52 years ago. I will however talk with the cave diving group and the Cave Rescue Council to have something more quickly accessible in place.

As the divers performed so spectacularly, I guess BCRC could become international!!! Clearly, there will be a lot more media interest going forward, and I know various people have been approached by Hollywood and a number of documentary producing organisations. Some documentaries have already been produced.

It has all been quite positive for caving. I personally think the Vern Unsworth - Elon Musk debacle is rather unfortunate, and I think we could have done without it. However, Elon is certainly coming out worse.

Andy Eavis
September 28th, 2018

From: David Rose via Council-list council-list@british-caving.org.uk
Subject: [BCA Council] BCA newsletter report
Date: 19 September 2018 at 16:46
To: council-list@british-caving.org.uk



Here is my report.

I have to say that I have found the news that was delivered at the AGM that only 8 per cent of BCA members currently opt in to receiving the newsletter by email quite depressing. I would be interested to know if any figures are available for the numbers who read it via the website, but my hunch is it isn't many more. (If this information is available, please let me know.) It is supposed to be a newsletter for all BCA members, not less than a tenth of them. If this figure cannot be drastically increased – to, say, 85 per cent – it seems to me there is little point in continuing to produce a newsletter at all, and we should give thought to terminating it.

I am familiar with the problems introduced by data protection in general and the GDPR, but is there not some way round this issue? For example, could it be stated on the annual membership form for clubs and individuals that anyone who joins will receive the newsletter by email unless they pro-actively opt out? I would welcome advice on this, but I can't see how the BCA can become a more vibrant organisation if so few members are kept up to speed as to what it actually does.

Meanwhile, I have decided to shift the publication of the next issue until after the next council meeting, as this seems to make better sense than to put it out beforehand. I also think that there is only a need for three issues a year, rather than four – one in October, the next after the January or February council, and the third after the AGM and council on the same day.

David Rose

Council-list mailing list
Council-list@british-caving.org.uk
http://british-caving.org.uk/mailman/listinfo/council-list_british-caving.org.uk

Webmaster's Report

Newsletter. The percentage of members who have opted in to having the Newsletter emailed directly to them is rather poor at only 8%. However the Newsletter is available to download from the website. Below is table showing the number of individuals who have looked at the webpage. These figures come from Google Analytics and should not be regarded as exact but as an indication. There is no way of knowing if these readers are BCA members or not.

	Feb 16	May 16	Jul 16	Oct 16	Jan 17	Apr 17	Jul 17	Nov 17	Feb 18	May 18
Three months	345	278	204	226	161	242	797	1027	811	482
All time	564	437	436	372	350	388	1033	1220	941	580

Given some of the idea circulated, Council should be reminded that it is illegal to email marketing items to members without their express permission. (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003). Notwithstanding, there are steps that can be taken that might improve the sign up rate - probably best first discussed in a P&I meeting.

P&I Website Proposals. It is proposed to spend an initial £5000 on a professional website designer. That would be a waste of the members' money. Web designers are interested in visual impact of a website, i.e. the window dressing. That's fine on a sales website but the BCA website is an information site. What count is the content. First and foremost what is needed is someone who's job is to obtain content. That primarily means chasing the officers. If that person also had a flare for copy-editing that would be a bonus.

Good images are also needed to embed in the articles. For a time I had an image editor but he resigned. So instead I approach Jerry Wooldridge who immediately and very generously gave me a set of great images.

The current website uses an attractive contemporary template that, crucially these days, works properly with mobile phones. With the addition of some more great images, revised content and tweaked menu structure it'll easily fulfill BCA's requirements.

It seems to me we are jumping to conclusions before asking the fundamental questions.

- What does BCA want its website to achieve? Possibly BCA's biggest issue is a lack of volunteers. Can the website help recruit more?
- Who is the target audience? The members? LCMLA/CIC trainees are probably a bigger audience.
- Should BCA be promoting itself or should it be promoting the member club who are at the sharp end?
- How does it fit in with the results of the Vision Working Group?
- Etc.

Facebook. Items of interest are regularly posted to the BCA Facebook page. Jane Allen, the new P&I Officer, has been included in the admin team.

David Cooke
Oct 2018

BCA Training Officer Report October 2018

BCA Training Officers Role

I have an invite to a manufacturer to look at training techniques that we currently use in BCA that may differ to what they have put out on their web site. The BCA Equipment officer and I will report back to training committee and the QMC our findings to come up with agreed best practice in BCA. The BCA Training Officers terms of reference which has been sent to previous council meetings and presented at the June AGM 2018 is included. (Appendix 1)

BCA Training Officers Role on the QMC

I have attended all of the QMC meetings this year and have confirmed to their convenor and the members that I will support them and take on any duties that they wish me to do. BCA training flowchart which has been sent to previous council meetings and presented at the June AGM 2018 is included. (Appendix 1)

BCA Training Committee

This is looking very healthy and we have no problems to report at all. The membership is strong and we have a team of very experienced and dedicated volunteers.

Hidden Earth

I was pleased to have the opportunity to deliver a talk on BCA training and to benefit from the feedback of those who attended. I came away very positive about my role and what BCA was providing with training to its members.

Access for BCA Trainers and assessors

As BCA Training Officer I have applied for cave permits for use in the CIC scheme. 4 permits have been granted via the BCA training officer this year for CIC panel members.

I arrange permits for CIC's to operate in systems that require them and I am now looking at sorting this out for LC/MLA trainers and assessors too and have agreed with the Northern Panel OLA to obtain a permit for him.

BCA Training Grants

We now have 8 national workshops set up across the country. (Appendix 2) Training committee has looked into BCA events to be set up by regional training officers in the future and grants now support these. This way, more BCA members get access to the workshops in all regions and will get to meet the BCA training officer and other committee members face to face and receive top level training.

DCA/BCA Coaching Guidelines

Over the last 12 months I have shared the DCA scheme with caving clubs in other areas with a view of moving this forward nationally. There has been positive feedback. It is a coaching scheme for cavers and concentrates on training the trainers as well as club members through workshops and training courses run by club members themselves assisted and mentored by a BCA trainer and assessor.

There are rumours that qualifications are to be introduced for recreational cavers. This is not true! There is a competency for personal SRT in the DCA scheme, which is driven by the caving club members. What we now do in TC is support BCA members, not tell them what to do. Any developments in this scheme are direct results from feedback by BCA members using it.

Nigel Atkins. BCA Training Officer 01/10/18

Appendix 1 BCA Training Officer Terms of Reference

BCA Training Officers Duties 2017:

The post is a voluntary position and is filled by election every three years. The Training Officer sits on BCA Council, the QMC and reports the work of the Training Committee to Council. Normally LCMLA and CIC candidates have little reason to contact the Training Officer other than to lodge an appeal.

To deal with applications for exemptions from formal assessment, to arbitrate and make decisions regarding reassessments, technical and procedural queries and to resolve disputes relating to individual candidates.

To oversee the disciplinary process but play no part in the investigation stage.

The Training Officer is responsible for ensuring the training schemes are maintained and generally promote the development of training in all areas of caving in the BCA.

Then training officer is the contact for all training activities of the BCA. For any enquiries relating to specific topics, the BCA training officer will direct these to the appropriate contacts.

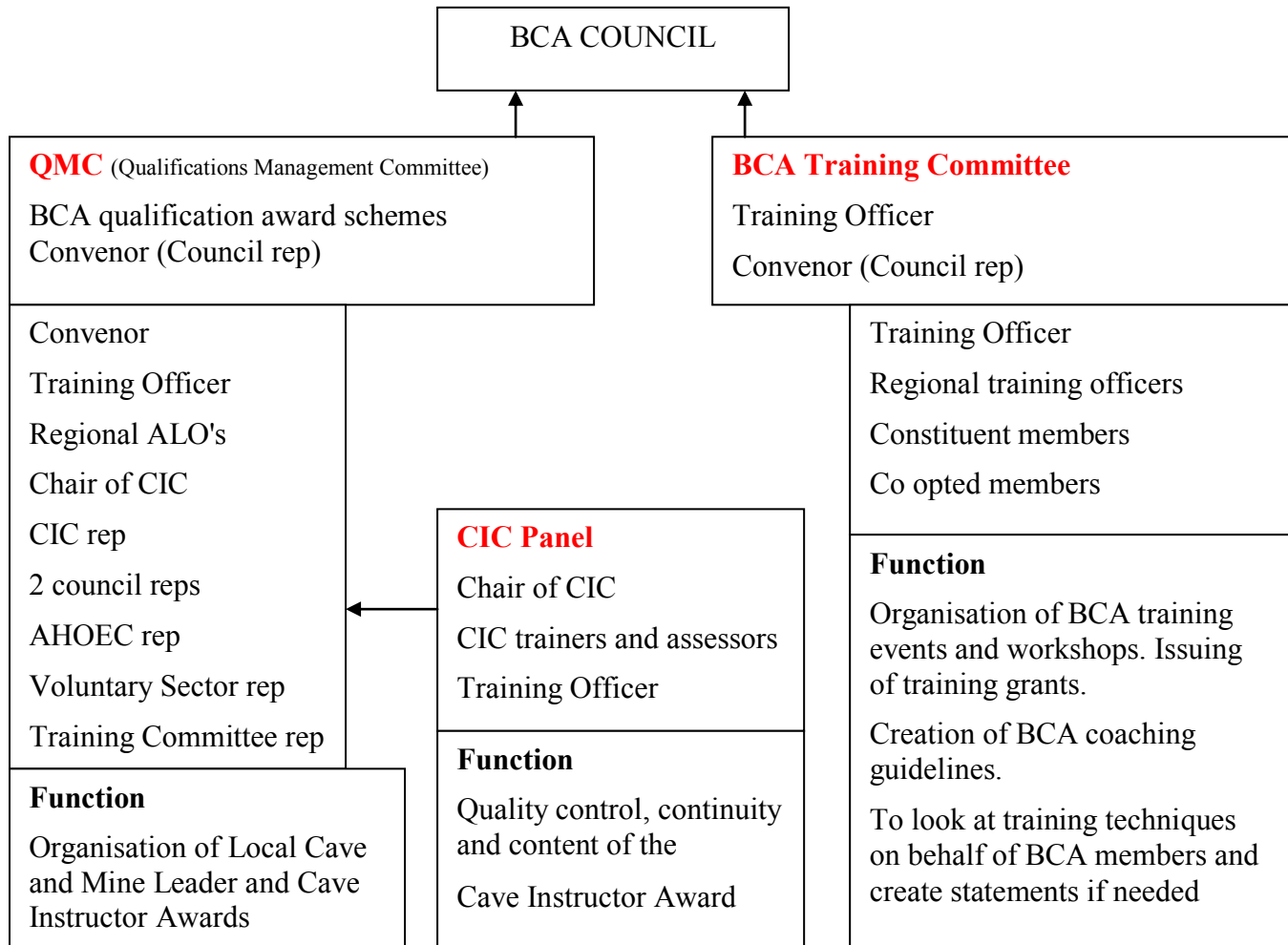
To authorise all award certificates and sign all Cave Instructor Certificates before they are issued.

To operate as Line Manager for the Training Administrator

To liaise and build relationships with the recreational side of caver training and support the work of the BCA training committee

NOTE: If BCA wish to have the training officer involved in QMC, I suggest the Training Officer works closely with BCA Executive and the Convenor of QMC to agree together what they can and would like to take on.

BCA Training set up as at BCA AGM June 3rd 2018



Appendix 3 BCA National Training Events

BCA Technical Workshops

Introduction to SRT (Single Rope Techniques) **workshop** - Arranged in conjunction with DCA

Date: Sunday **October 14th** 2018 - **Location:** Derbyshire

This workshop is the perfect introduction to SRT and is essential to pick up modern techniques and try before you buy your ideal SRT set up. All SRT equipment is provided by BCA.

Introduction to SRT (Single Rope Techniques) **workshop** - BCA Training Committee

Date: Saturday **November 10th** 2018 - **Location:** Cheddar

This workshop is the same as above held at the new facility at Wookey Hole.

SRT Intermediate (Single Rope Techniques) **workshop** - BCA Training Committee

Date: Saturday **December 8th** 2018 - **Location:** South Wales

This workshop is for those who are using SRT and wish to look at more advanced techniques and pick up top tips.

SRT Pitch Rigging workshop - Arranged in conjunction with DCA

Date: Saturday **November 24th** 2018 - **Location:** Derbyshire

The perfect workshop for those who are proficient using SRT and wish to improve their SRT rigging skills, pick up tips from qualified BCA instructors etc.

SRT Pitch Rigging workshop - Arranged in conjunction with CNCC

Date: Saturday **December 1st** 2018 - **Location:** Yorkshire Dales

This workshop is the same as above held at near Settle in the Yorkshire Dales.

SRT Self Rescue workshop - Arranged in conjunction with DCA

Date: Sunday **November 25th** 2018 - **Location:** Derbyshire

Could you help one of your team out if they got into trouble on a rope? This is an ideal workshop for those who are proficient in personal SRT and pitch rigging who wish to improve their SRT self rescue skills.

BCA Specialist Workshops

Weather and Cave Flooding Workshop - Arranged in conjunction with DCA

Date: Saturday **November 17th** 2018 - **Location:** Derbyshire

A practical day looking at a variety of situations resulting from flooding in caves.

Cave Navigation Workshop - **BCA Training Committee**

Date: Sunday **December 9th** 2018 - **Location:** Yorkshire Dales or South Wales - TBC

A classic caving trip looking at underground navigation, cave formation and geology.

Qualifications Management Working Group

This working group is itself a work in progress as it adapts to reflect changes resulting from recent council meetings and the 2018 AGM. The structure of this working group is, however, incidental to the cohesion of the group in designing, developing and resourcing the BCA Award Schemes. We are currently working on new resources for Local Cave and Mine Leader candidates and for all cavers, and developing the moderation of training and assessment by BCA Trainer/Assessors.

I append Phil Baker's report, as it has long been the Chair who reported to Council. Phil is stepping down as Chair and on behalf of the Group's members I would like to thank Phil for his time in the 'hot seat', especially for his focus on efficiency and productivity.

Stephan Natynczuk, Convenor.

Report for BCA Council 6 10 18 from BCA Qualifications Management Committee

This working group is the point of contact for all cavers associated or involved in the BCA Award Schemes. The group is made up of a number of cavers from around the country all of whom have committed much time and energy developing and supporting the BCA Award schemes. The strength of the group is that it allows a democratic approach to developing the awards schemes, associated techniques, responding to award enquiries, and resource development. This consensus ironed out inconsistency and mixed messages. The Training Officer is a welcome member of QMC as a link with club/expedition/university and individual cavers ensuring parity of techniques and advice. Mary Wilde has again carried out a tremendous job as Training Administrator in a complex and demanding role.

Some headline items since the last report include

1. Resources - QMC have continued to develop a series of resource documents to support not only the award schemes but recreational and club cavers. LCMLA Level 1 Rope Work is in final draft and a few copies should be available for the meeting
2. Finance – The BCA Awards generated a surplus of £2,139 last financial year following a restructuring of the charging regime within the schemes. The projection by the BCA Treasurer for 2019 shows a deficit of £1070. However the last meeting concluded that registrations may well go up in the last quarter (as in previous years), so this may actually balance the final budget. In addition, provider fees have been substantially increased over the last two years so now is not the time to increase them again. There was a feeling that as a surplus had been generated in 2018, it would be reasonable to ask BCA to offset any slight deficit (only half of the surplus) should it occur next year.
3. Membership of BCA – all Trainer/Assessors (T/As) for the award schemes are now members of BCA and this forms part of their Trainer/Assessor agreement
4. Chair and deputy Chair of QMC roles – the process for recruitment for these roles has been successful and the new post holders should be in place by 30 October 2018.
5. Terms of Reference for QMC and Training Committee (and associated roles). There is currently a confusion over the roles of the Working Group and Committee and those involved, particularly the

Training Officer. It is proposed to Council that a group meet separately to discuss (and as required compromise) to develop a terms of reference once and for all for QMC and TC, and associated roles to present to Council in January. The group could be made up of the QMC Chair/Deputy, Training Officer, Convener, Secretary of BCA and one other semi – independent BCA arbitrator. This would aim to harness all the positive energy and goodwill that all involved have offered for the good of the award holders and ‘recreational’ cavers.

6. The research for a data base management system to support the overall management of the scheme has concluded that the best option was Tahdah, as used by Mountain Training UK. However diligent research by the Treasurer has indicated that there are significant issues with the company’s long term viability. A second option would be Go Membership, used by Canoe England, Canoe Wales and Canoe Scotland. QMC request that BCA Council consider this option now so it can be progressed to provide a robust and professional service to award holders in line with other NGB awards nationally. The cost could be saved by the generation of new award applicants and the cessation of the print costs of logbooks (c. £1,500)

Phil Baker, 27-9-18

THE BCA TRAINING COMMITTEE & THE BCA QUALIFICATIONS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE – DISCUSSION PAPER.

Both these committees who deal with training matters as part of the BCA Structure have specific roles within the organisation. The QMC deals with the management of BCA qualifications; the LCMLA and CIC qualifications, the Training Committee deals with all other matters of training within the BCA.

The recent proposal to change the name of the Training Committee by including the word “Recreational”, subsequently withdrawn, failed to appreciate that the majority of cavers (and potholers) consider themselves to be cavers and that, in fact, the minority of cavers who receive some form of payment for providing caving services are often referred to as “commercial cavers”. It is those cavers, caving clubs and regional councils and other bodies who need to be represented by the Training Committee; recently though the impression has been given that these bodies and the training committee are, in some way, less important than the QMC and it’s functions despite the fact that the training committee has been and remains an important Standing Committee of the BCA and before that the NCA.

The Training Committee needs specific Terms of Reference to properly encompass its role within the BCA. These are:

- i) The organisation of caver training, club and regional training events and the administration of training grants.
- ii) Liaison with other BCA Committees including E&T and C&A on matters affecting training and, where necessary, the dissemination of information relating to training to cavers, clubs and regional councils.
- iii) Liaising with regional councils and other bodies to address matters relating to training as they arise.
- iv) Promoting training for cavers and clubs by way of guidelines on effective training methods, such guidelines to be provided on a non-mandatory basis.
- v) Liaising with the QMC on matters of training when required.
- vi) Responsible in association with the QMC and BCA National Council in formulating and maintaining an effective training policy.
- vii) Representing, within established protocols, matters of training and training process raised by any major incident involving cavers.

The QMC also needs its Terms of Reference as a working party clarified:

- i) The management of current BCA qualifications.
- ii) Liaising with the Training Committee on matters of mutual interest.
- iii) Liaising with the BCA National Council and Training Committee on matters related to BCA Training Policy.
- iv) The QMC operates on the basis agreed by the BCA AGM and National Council.

Alan Butcher

30th September 2018 – V2

From: Rostam Namaghi [REDACTED]
Subject: Youth and Development Report
Date: 1 October 2018 at 01:27
To: Nick Williams [REDACTED]

RN

Apologies for the brief report - my new job in Manchester is taking up my report writing time!

Summary of actions taken since the AGM:

Kit procured on behalf of Lancaster to the tune of £1500 as agreed in the budget

Kit delivered and a photo opportunity taken down Alum Pot.

Youth and Development Logo developed, under review currently.

Legal question regarding Charterhouse drafted and awaiting results.

Inquired and have given advice regarding other access age restrictions (ongoing).

Draft Safeguarding: Chris has developed a policy and various members of Y&D have reviewed it and given feedback.

Budget allowance has been increased for the next calendar year due to a potential Youth Camp event.

Advice given to a BCA member club in North Wales regarding safeguarding and liability.

Next Quarter actions

Design an information campaign regarding safeguarding policies.

Produce written materials (and put them through BCA publishing) and film videos.

Begin the Meet the Members campaign (where the Y&D team go out to clubs and help with making them better for young people and students, and learn about good practice within member clubs).

Follow up leads on a Swansea and Birmingham Universities revival.

Decide on a venue and date for an annual meeting of the Youth and Development group as per requirement of a standing committee.

Proposals for this meeting:

1) That BCA membership be free of charge for under 18s

I conducted a review of our membership data and found:

There are 76 names listed as having a birthday during or after the year 2000.

There are 61 names listed as having a birthday during or after the year 2002.

The validity of this data is severely questionable as one of the members of council happens to be listed as under 18. I don't know if this over or under estimates the true numbers but given the onward march of time and the lack of updates to the database I strongly suspect the true number is a fraction of the numbers listed.

So the potential cost (in terms of lost revenue) would be:

£608 for under 18s per year (76 x 8)

£488 for under 16s per year (61 x 8)

On further discussion with Robin a war games scenario of 500 new members was thought to cost £2-3000 a year with £500 coming in administrative costs. I think the latter could be reduced hence proposal number 2. How many newly signed up youth cavers will translate into lifetime members is highly debatable and to produce a cost benefit analysis would be spurious at best.

Given the relative small cost comparative to the whole membership I strongly believe that this is in our best interests. It will enable more young people to go caving as cavers, something which has become a small minority in the sport. Hopefully this will also make it easier for those who have their interest piqued in the commercial sector to go out and try it, as it removes one more barrier - cost. The difference between our original under 16s proposal and the under 18s proposal is so small that I did not bother to provide multiple choices.

2) End Annual Membership Cards

Provide one card when you join that has your membership number on it that could then be checked with BCA online to see if you are a currently paid up member for areas where there are access restrictions based on the insurance scheme. The cost estimate for administration, manufacture and delivery is approximately £1 per member. This is 4 times the Conservation and Access budget. The Scouts, the BMC and many other organisations have moved towards digital cards and we should catch up. Even if the cost saving was reduced to 50p per member then the total outlay would cover the cost of (an improbable) 500 under 18s joining BCA.

BCA Council meeting 6 October 2018

Vision and Constitution Working Group report

I must firstly send my apologies for not being at the meeting.

Not much had happened so far and I apologise for this: I have been waiting to get the minutes from the AGM just to make sure that we were setting up what was agreed.

At Hidden Earth we ran a session to help get people talking about BCA... and thanks to those of you who were there (but the best thing is that there were some non council members!) I have spent some time thinking about how to get new people involved in a 'new vision' for BCA and I feel the first part is to get them talking about it. We also had pieces of paper dotted around for people to be able to write down ideas. I will have put the ideas together into a readable format before the next meeting.

I hope also to create an online questionnaire about BCA to find out 'what people want'. It's important to open up to all possibilities at the start then close them down further down the line rather than shut things down from the start which is something that people have complained makes them feel 'why bother?'.

One thing that I hope with the help of Jane (the publication boss!) and some others is to put together a leaflet about what BCA does (and the regional bodies, QMC and the many other parts of BCA) as there is a massive lack of understanding and in order to get people to think about change we need to first build a picture that people understand. Much to many people's surprise we don't just do insurance! Maybe even a flow diagram would help?

So, I suppose, I'd like the following questions answered from each regional body / sub committee / associated body. This would make a great start to building that picture!

- 1) who you are
- 2) how you are made up (clubs/individuals, elected/ volunteered) and how many?
- 3) what your remit is? (eg. Permits, funding, information?)
- 4) what you can do for the caver on the street ? (this is all about getting people to use the organisation)

Please email me at [REDACTED] with the subject 'BCA info <bodyname>' and I will reply to say I have received it!

The working group has some members already but I feel we are still very much in a formative stage and I hope that new people who are not yet in the BCA bubble will be attracted to participate.

Ok sorry this is much longer than I meant it to be.

Hellie Adams
30 - Sep - 18

Cave Registry Working Group

BCRA SIGs. There is a bit of a revival going on in the BCRA Special Interest Groups with the relatively recently formed Cave Archeology Group the new Cave Biology Group and now active talk about forming a Cave Hydrology Group. The Cave Registry Data Archive, which BCA maintains and funds, already holds copies of some cave biological data including the renowned Hazelton Database. I have extended an offer to host hydrology data as well should the group come into existence.

David Cooke

Oct 2018

IT Working Group

Golden Age of Caving. Last December there was a successful and very enjoyable weekend of caving talks and films hosted by the Royal Geographic Society in London. The ITWP was involved in a minor way to make those talks available online. They are available on the micro-site created for the event at <http://www.rgs.gharparau.org.uk/talks> and are well worth a look.

Training Admin Software. Work continues on locating software to support the training administration function. The ITWP is ready to advise and perform the necessary due diligence on the technical aspects when Training are ready. Particular care will be taken to make sure that BCA retains control of its data so that training administration can continue whatever might happen to the supplier.

GDPR. The General Data Protection Regulation came into force on 25 May 2018. The BCA Privacy Notice has been published on the website. An article entitled “GDPR for Caving Clubs” has been published on the website. Consent to process members personal data was gained from them as part of the 2018 renewal process. The renewal forms included a paragraph on data protection and also drew the members’ attention to the Privacy Notice. There is more work to do internally, particularly with respect to Training. GDPR compliance should be seen as an on-going process that will need periodically reviewing. As such I think the responsibility for GDPR should be passed to a group comprising representatives from the Executive, Membership, Training and ITWP.

Further to the question raised at the April meeting, that I wasn’t present for: The BCA is registered with the data protection register and has been since 2012. This can be easily checked by visiting <https://ico.org.uk/ESDWebPages/Search>. The BCA is not required to have a Data Protection Officer but is required to make sure it observes the GDPR and the recently enacted Data Protection Act 2018.

Channels of communication and reporting. The IT Working Party (ITWP) terms of reference are:-

1. To manage and coordinate BCA’s IT infrastructure.
2. To commission and implement IT projects as deemed desirable for BCA.
3. To provide a resource of expertise available to BCA.

It does seem odd that the two IT projects created by the AGM, i.e. remote access to meetings and holding online ballots are not under the auspices of the ITWP. It seems to cut across the whole purpose of the ITWP. In particular the channels of communication are not working.

Online Ballot. Will has done a good job with his report but there are some key decisions that need to be made that I don’t think are covered sufficiently.

- Are we insisting on electronic voting only and ditching postal votes? If not how will the postal and electronic ballot be integrated? There big cost implications for a postal ballot which will need quantifying.
- The preamble to the AGM motion suggest the votes would take place before the AGM. Will’s paper suggests votes will happen after but not during the AGM although it could also be read as during and ratified after. If the later I can’t see how that is different from the current system.
- Does this scheme apply to the election of officers as well a motions?

In the short to medium term I think it is best to outsource any ballot. This was the preferred option last time but was prevented by a failure to notify our members of this possible use of their data under the terms of the GDPR. This impediment has now been removed. Furthermore GDPR is not an impediment to using American companies so long as they are signed up to the EU-US Privacy Shield. In my review some of the best offerings were American. In the longer term I think we should develop our own solution to reduce the cost.

The BCA Online database of members is perfectly good enough to use for a ballot. Reports are regularly run to spot duplicates, multiple memberships, name changes, etc. The Membership Administrator spends a fair bit of time chasing these up. DIM postal addresses are checked for validity. We rely on the clubs for accurate CIM postal addresses. All members who supply an email address can check their detail with BCA Online at any time.

Remote Access to Meetings. Video Conferencing. I sought out Tim at Hidden Earth to discuss this project. A consultation with the ITWP and Internet searches had not uncovered a significant change in the technology nor the market. As such we agreed that the Rolls Royce solution where each person (local and remote) has their own camera, mic. and screen was unaffordable. A solution where the main room has a communal camera, mic. and large screen and where the remote participants use a PC or laptop was achievable. The remote participants would not be able to readily see who is speaking. The feel would be more like an enhance conference call. Therefore the line “This access should allow members participation on a similar level as those attending in person.” from the AGM motion is not going to be achieved.

The software, be it Webex, Zoom or Go To Meeting, is all very similar. Having conducted an extensive review in 2016 I didn’t want to waste time conducting another extensive review in order to save maybe £100 per year.

Although as time goes by that argument becomes less convincing since the pricing and implementation is ever changing. Don't overlook the hidden cost of re-training.

Ideally the main room should have the equipment permanently install in order for it to be reliable and remove the faff of setup and take-down. The quality of the Red Lion's broadband has not been established so my suggestion of a trial at this meeting will not happen. Notwithstanding, I feel it is unlikely the Red Lion will be able to adequately host a video conference meeting. We will need a new venue. As such I can see the benefit of taking Spanset up on their offer to host our January meeting to see a demonstration. We will need at least a couple of volunteers to be the remote users.

David Cooke
Oct 2018

QMC Candidate Management System

Option 1: TahDah

Preferred option

Overall the most fit for purpose site. Currently used successfully by the MLTB and AMI. Familiar to many who work in the outdoor industry and meets all our needs with regards to candidate management, certificates, diary alerts, and taking payments. However significant concerns with the company's accounts.

Evidence of function: Various meetings and demonstrations presented to the previous chair of QMC with very positive feedback on the working relationship. Based in Llandudno, North Wales

Costs: I'm assuming the costs have already been pulled together by the previous QMC chair; I've do not have access to them directly.

Option 2: Go Membership

Secondary choice

Robust looking system which could be manipulated to suit our needs however is more suitable to sports clubs. Currently adopted by Canoe Wales, having been successfully used by Canoe England and Scotland. No log book at present however work in progress to resolve this. Global company (US based).

Evidence of function: Online video conference and demo given together with good email communication.

Costs: One off set up fee of £500 then £85-£145 a month
Log book additional cost £2,000 set up plus additional £30 a month
Online payments 2.9% plus 20p for credit or debit card transactions or 2% plus 20p for bank transfer

Other options (did not meet all of the criteria)

Wild Apricot

Not fit for purpose. Many of the function we require are not currently incorporated, looks more suited to sports clubs. No logbook or satisfactory candidate management system.

Evidence of function: Online demo/trial for 30 days. Followed by many many automated chase up emails!

Cost: \$90/month

QMC Candidate Management System

my Clubhouse

Similar system and limitations to Wild Apricot. Looked competitively priced however multiple bolt ons needed all of which significantly increase the overall cost

Evidence of function: Online demo/trial for 30 days. As with Wild Apricot several automated emails chasing up the enquiry but nothing personal.

Cost: £60+vat/month. Plus various bolt ons (in the region of additional £36 plus vat a month)

Sports League

As with some of the other provides more sports club orientated. No log book function.

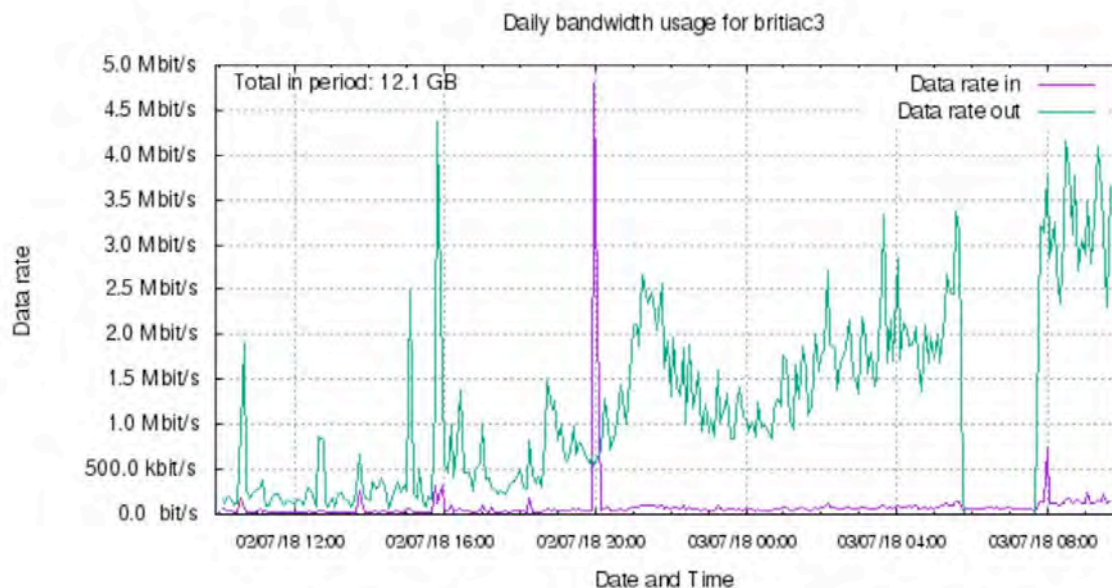
Evidence of function: Online video conference given, good email communication but no aggressive follow up

Cost: pending

BCA Web Services

Thai Cave Rescue. The day the Thai Cave rescue first made the news was an interesting day for the BCA web server. Below you can see how the load on the server started going up and up as more and more people visited the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) site. On the very left hand side is the normal load of about 0.2Mb/s for the 50 odd hosted domains. It reached a peak of over 7Mb/s (not shown) for the BCRC site alone! Not surprisingly it took the server down. I temporarily purchased another server that day and moved the BCRC site to it. That allowed the other 49 domains to recover. Fortunately the dedicated BCRC server was then able to handle the demand and stayed up through the remainder of the rescue. The cost of the temporary server was £50. I propose that BCA covers the cost, effectively donating that amount to BCRC.

Bandwidth Graphs



Firewall. As time has gone by the two BCA servers have been subject to more and more hacking attempts (many hundreds per day). This has the effect of slowing them down and making them less reliable. Recently a new firewall and other software has been installed to combat this.

Email Forwarders. For various reasons (GDPR, DMARC, server reputation, security) it is no longer best practice to forward email to domains that are not hosted by BCA. Over a period of time the forwarders will be replaced by email accounts. Regrettably but unavoidably this will require a small amount of effort on behalf of Council members to add the new account details to their email clients. Advice and help will be provided.

David Cooke
Oct 2018

British Caving Library Report to BCA Council, 6 Oct. 2018

The Library has made a great leap forward in the last 3 months, having secured the lease of a second room at the Glutton Bridge site at a cost of £1980 per year; this is in addition to our main Library room which costs us £4800 per year. This will enable us to place all cave survey and mapping related material together in one room for ease of working; this room will have its own dedicated PC and printer (both items have been donated to us), for the use of volunteers and visitors.

This extra space has the additional benefit of allowing us to clear floor space downstairs so that we can more easily accommodate visiting groups for meetings, etc. At present we can comfortably accommodate about 8 - 10 people, this should increase to around 10-12 people, so enabling us to make better use of the Library for meetings, scientific workshops, etc. So, in addition to our usual meetings of BCRA Council and the various BCA Training Committee groups, we have our first scientific workshop scheduled: a Cave Surveying Group Intermediate Therion Training Course, 10-11th November based at Glutton Bridge. We are also planning to acquire a digital projector and screen for the use of visiting groups.

Part of the extra space downstairs will also be used to extend our shelving to accommodate more books and journals as we continue to receive a considerable amount of material by journal exchange of BCRA Caves & Karst Science with overseas clubs, by legacies and donations from cavers and by purchase. We now have upwards of 250 m of shelf length, an enormous increase in only 10 years on the original BCRA Library's 70 m, but we still need more. Some of the material we are receiving as part of legacies is archive material, of some importance to the increasing group of people interested in the history of caving.

Our Library Website is being upgraded and improved by small a group of dedicated caver volunteers so that we now have online, via www.caving-library.org.uk, the Bibliography & Catalogue, the BCRA Archives, the Audio Archive, the Registry of UK Caving Collections and links to other libraries and archives.

Our aim has always been to make this, not just a collection of books, but a full scale Library and Information Centre and we are well on the way to achieving this. We now have an international reputation and enquiries are coming from outside the UK as well as enquiries from non-caving organisations in the UK who realise we have something to offer. Enquiries requiring research are now a regular feature and we have recently been asked to help with archive material for an author. Our paid Librarian, who works one day a week, now spends a good deal of her time dealing with these research requests - this is in addition to her normal work of cataloguing and responding to requests for scans or copies of specific items from the Library. We welcome visitors and hope to extend our contacts with overseas cavers and also with student cavers in Britain through contacts with CHECC.

We have been able to attract some volunteers to help with our work and now have a small team, including some foreign cavers who have been particularly helpful in cataloguing and translating some exchange material. Another small group of students from SUSS is beginning to get to grips with cataloguing the many hundreds of surveys we have and, with the help of DCA, we aim to scan and put online copies of surveys of all the major Peak District caves on the DCA website. We would very much welcome more volunteer help - batches of material can be taken away to be catalogued, the finished files emailed to us and the material returned - a good deal of the work can be done "off site".

We are now in the process of re-writing the original 2009 Library Business Plan as we have a clearer idea of the progress we have made and how best we can continue to improve the facilities and extend the use made of the Library. I hope that BCA Council will look sympathetically at our need for increased funding.

Jenny Potts,

BCRA Library Co-ordinator.

From: Chris Boardman via Council-list council-list@british-caving.org.uk 
Subject: [BCA Council] Draft safeguarding policy
Date: 16 September 2018 at 16:54
To: council-list@british-caving.org.uk



Dear all,

As promised at the AGM I have drafted a safeguarding policy and this is attached. In addition to the basic policy there are several appendices which are the really important stuff for clubs and members.

- A good practice document which, once we agree on it, should be disseminated to as many members as possible
- Guidelines for clubs which try to set out the practicalities as clearly as possible
- A consent form setting out the arrangements from a parent's perspective

If anyone has any suggestions for additions or improvements, please do let me know!

I think a basic description of the nature of caving would also be valuable for parents, but I'm conscious that I've sat on this policy for some time, so it's time to ask your thoughts.

If there is interest in a few clubs taking direct care of youngsters and thus needing DBS checks, I will look for an online agency such as the one I use at work, and create a form that members would fill in. However, no club has yet suggested that they do want to go down this route.

The policy may have to wait until the next AGM before it can formally be adopted – but that will give everyone time to make comments and for the policy and guidelines to be rounded off into good shape.

If you need to reach me, my e-mail is [REDACTED] and mobile [REDACTED].

Best wishes,
Chris Boardman
Safeguarding Officer



BCA Draft Good
practic...s.docx



BCA DRAFT
safegu...s.docx



BCA Draft
Conse...m.docx



BCA Draft
Safegu...8.docx

Council-list mailing list
Council-list@british-caving.org.uk
http://british-caving.org.uk/mailman/listinfo/council-list_british-caving.org.uk

British Caving Association Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines

Introduction

Whether clubs wish to allow young people or vulnerable adults to use club facilities or attend club activities is a matter for each club to decide. That said, for caving to continue to attract an active and enthusiastic membership, making it possible for youngsters and vulnerable adults to take part would be a very valuable step. This policy sets out how clubs can do this, how they can safeguard children and vulnerable adults, and what to do if there is a suspicion of abuse.

Policy statement

For the purposes of this policy,

- A child is someone under the age of 18.
- A vulnerable adult is someone who may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The British Caving Association acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. The BCA is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice.

The BCA recognises that the welfare and interests of children or vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children and vulnerable adults:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of caving in an environment that is appropriate to their needs
- are protected from abuse whilst caving or using club facilities, or outside of caving for example whilst using social media with club members

The BCA acknowledges that some children or vulnerable adults, including disabled people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy the BCA will

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with resources to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children or vulnerable adults.
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

This policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for all BCA members. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and could ultimately result in exclusion from the BCA.

Raising awareness

BCA is keen to encourage member clubs to offer activities for young people and vulnerable adults. The BCA has a 'good practice' document which is an appendix to this safeguarding policy. When the policy is introduced, the policy will be widely publicised on the BCA website and in publications, and the good practice document will be promoted to all members. In addition there are Guidelines for clubs which set out practical measures for dealing with safeguarding.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by any bodies that provide grant aid to the BCA or member clubs
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, which may include the following people:

- BCA Safeguarding Officer
- The relevant Club's Officers
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/Police
- BCA Council members
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)
- If a club member's privileges are suspended or revoked, it is possible that officers of other clubs will also have to be informed

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Clubs wishing to offer activities for children or vulnerable adults

There are three scenarios:

- a) Parents are present and supervise their child, or a vulnerable adult related to them. Or,
- b) Parents entrust their child or relative's care to a responsible adult who is well known to the family. Or,
- c) The club undertakes to care for a child, in which case appropriate vetting steps including a DBS check are required for the adults directly involved in that care.

So that everyone is clear about how this works, there is a **consent form** appended to this policy, which parents are required to sign. A separate document provides detailed **guidelines for clubs**, and all BCA members should comply with the '**good practice**' document.

Types of abuse

Abuse can fall into the following categories

Physical

This includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, giving the wrong (or no) medication, restraining someone or only letting them do certain things at certain times.

Sexual

This involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, taking sexual photographs, making a child or vulnerable adult look at pornography or watch sexual acts, or sexual assault.

Psychological

This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, depriving someone of contact with someone else, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, putting pressure on someone to do something, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

Financial or material

This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, putting pressure on someone about their financial arrangements (including wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions) or the misuse or stealing of property, possessions or benefits.

Discriminatory

This includes types of harassment or insults because of someone's race, gender or gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Neglect and acts of omission

This includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to educational services, or not giving someone what they need to help them live, such as medication, enough nutrition and heating.

Bullying

BCA has a separate policy which defines bullying and sets out possible actions to take.

Possible Signs of Abuse

The BCA acknowledges that its members are not experts at recognising abuse. The BCA therefore expects members to discuss any concerns they may have with regard to the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult immediately with the person in charge (see section 'What You Should Do Next'). If this is not practical and the situation is deemed to be too serious to delay then advice can be sought from Social Services or the Police.

It is important to recognise that some children or vulnerable adults may have additional vulnerabilities and may face additional barriers or difficulties in communicating any concerns or problems because of their race, gender, age, abilities, religion, sexual orientation, or political persuasion. Members need to recognise this and be particularly sensitive should concerns be raised by such children or vulnerable adults or in relation to them.

Below are listed some of the characteristics which may be evidence of abuse. These are by no means exhaustive and are only indicators of potential abuse, **not** confirmation.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to injury.
- An injury of which the explanation seems inconsistent and /or the child or vulnerable adult is unwilling to discuss.
- The child or vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them.
- Unexplained behaviour changes e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty making friends.
- A child or vulnerable adult being prevented from socialising
- Displaying variation in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Becoming increasingly unkempt or dirty.

It must be recognised that the presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that actual abuse is taking place. **It is not** the responsibility of BCA members to decide whether abuse is occurring, **but it is their responsibility to act upon any concerns** (see section 'What You Should Do Next').

Advice to members

How to Respond to a Disclosure, Suspicion or Allegation

A child or vulnerable adult in your care may indicate to you that they are being abused in some way or information may come to you of possible abuse. On receiving this information you should:

- React calmly: do not rush into inappropriate action. What you are told may be very shocking but it is important you give the child or vulnerable adult some stability;
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they are not to blame and that they did the right thing to tell someone, i.e. you, about the incident;
- Take the child or vulnerable adult seriously and listen carefully to them. Recognise how difficult it was for them to tell you;
- Only ask questions which help to clarify the situation. Do not question any more than is strictly necessary, and avoid asking leading questions.
- If possible allow only one adult to talk to the child or vulnerable adult to begin with.
- Try not to make the child or vulnerable adult repeat their account unnecessarily;
- Do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain that you may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening but that you will endeavour to keep the incident as confidential as possible; and
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard or seen as soon as possible, using the BCA safeguarding incident report form.
- Notify your club's chair or other senior committee member
- Notify BCA's National Safeguarding Officer
- If criminal behaviour is suspected, then either you or a member of your club's committee should make a referral to police or social services.

Do not:

- Take sole responsibility for further action (see section 'What You Should Do Next' on Page 13)
- Approach or try to contact the alleged abuser
- Ignore what has happened
- Make promises you cannot keep
- In cases of suspected criminal behaviour, it is not your job, nor that of club or BCA officers, to investigate

What happens if you are accused of an abusive action

In the event of an accusation:

- Make notes of all your actions/contacts with the child or vulnerable adult in question as soon as possible.
- Seek access to professional and legal advice.
- Ensure that you are no longer working with the child/children or vulnerable adults making the allegation.
- Follow the procedures laid out in the Safeguarding Policy and supporting documents.
- Accept that colleagues may not be in a position to discuss the matter with you while the investigation is underway.
- Accept that you may be barred from club premises or club activities when children or vulnerable adults are present.

Such events are difficult for all concerned. The BCA will do its utmost to remain impartial in all matters relating to an accusation. The main concern with any incident is the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult. For an individual against whom an allegation has been made this will be a difficult time. It is important that you seek help and support.

Responding to allegations – actions for clubs and BCA

There are many possible scenarios. Here are some examples:

- Criminal behaviour is suspected. In this event a referral to police or social services must be made, either by the person first discovering the situation, or by a club officer. That referral must be made promptly, ie within a few hours.
- A club may become aware of an allegation or investigation taking place, that is entirely unrelated to the club, but involves a club member, outside of a club setting.
- Club member(s) may have concerns about the behaviour of a club, that don't appear to be criminal, but which do need to be investigated

Protection of children and vulnerable adults whilst an investigation is underway

Clearly, clubs have a duty of care and so must act to protect children and vulnerable adults in one of the two following ways.

Limited suspension

This involves barring a club member from using club facilities or participating in club activities, where children or vulnerable adults are expected to be present. However, the club member may continue with activities when children or vulnerable adults are not expected to be present.

To put this in context, if someone is under investigation by police for possession of illegal images of children, such investigations generally last many months and involve considerable stress on all involved. Being able to continue with leisure activities during this time, where those activities do not involve youngsters, would be of great value to someone who is under investigation.

Given that many BCA member clubs have only limited amounts of activity by children, the club may determine that it is reasonable to bar a member from activities that involve children, but to permit other activities to continue.

Full suspension

A club's committee may determine that it is in the best interests of the club for the member to be suspended from all use of club facilities or participating in club activities, at all times.

Confidentiality

The club must take reasonable steps to ensure that limited or full suspension is complied with. It is highly unlikely that this would involve notifying all members, but members who participate in club activities very regularly may have to be notified so that they would notice if a member did not comply with their suspension.

Similarly, the BCA Safeguarding Officer or Council may feel that it is necessary to notify membership secretaries of other clubs, in order to prevent a member over whom there are concerns from moving to other clubs. This would be decided on a case-by-case basis, by the BCA Safeguarding Officer and at least one other council member, and clubs who were notified would be asked to keep the matter confidential – only key club officers would need to know.

Liaison between clubs, BCA Council and insurers

In all situations where there are suspicions, investigations or a member is suspended, the decisions of the club's committee must be forwarded to the BCA's Safeguarding Officer. Very rarely, the BCA's safeguarding officer or BCA Council may feel that more stringent protective steps are required than the club has already taken. The club's committee may then either comply with those steps, or refuse to do so. BCA provides liability insurance for all members and in this event, BCA would have to notify the insurers who would determine whether the club's insurance would be suspended. It is very much hoped that such a scenario will never play out.

Outcomes once an investigation is complete

Again, there are several possible outcomes.

- It may be that it is decided that the concerns or suspicions had no merit
- It may be that there are legitimate concerns, but which do not imply criminal behaviour:
 - A club's committee may decide to offer advice to a member about their future behaviour.
 - Or the committee might decide permanently to limit a member's activities, for example by not allowing them to participate in activities where children or vulnerable adults are present. The committee might feel that the issue would be re-visited after a suitable period of time has elapsed.
 - Or, the committee may feel that the outcome of the investigation means that the member has to be permanently excluded from membership.
- It is essential that the club notify the BCA safeguarding officer of their decisions.
- As described above, BCA may feel that other clubs would need to be notified.

Recording information

Information that is passed on to the BCA, Social Services and the Police must be as helpful as possible. Hence there is a necessity for making as detailed record as possible. This should endeavour to contain:

- the nature of the incident;
- a description of any visible injuries;
- the child's account;
- times, dates or other relevant information;
- a clear distinction between what is fact, hearsay and opinion; and
- a record using the BCA's Safeguarding Incident form

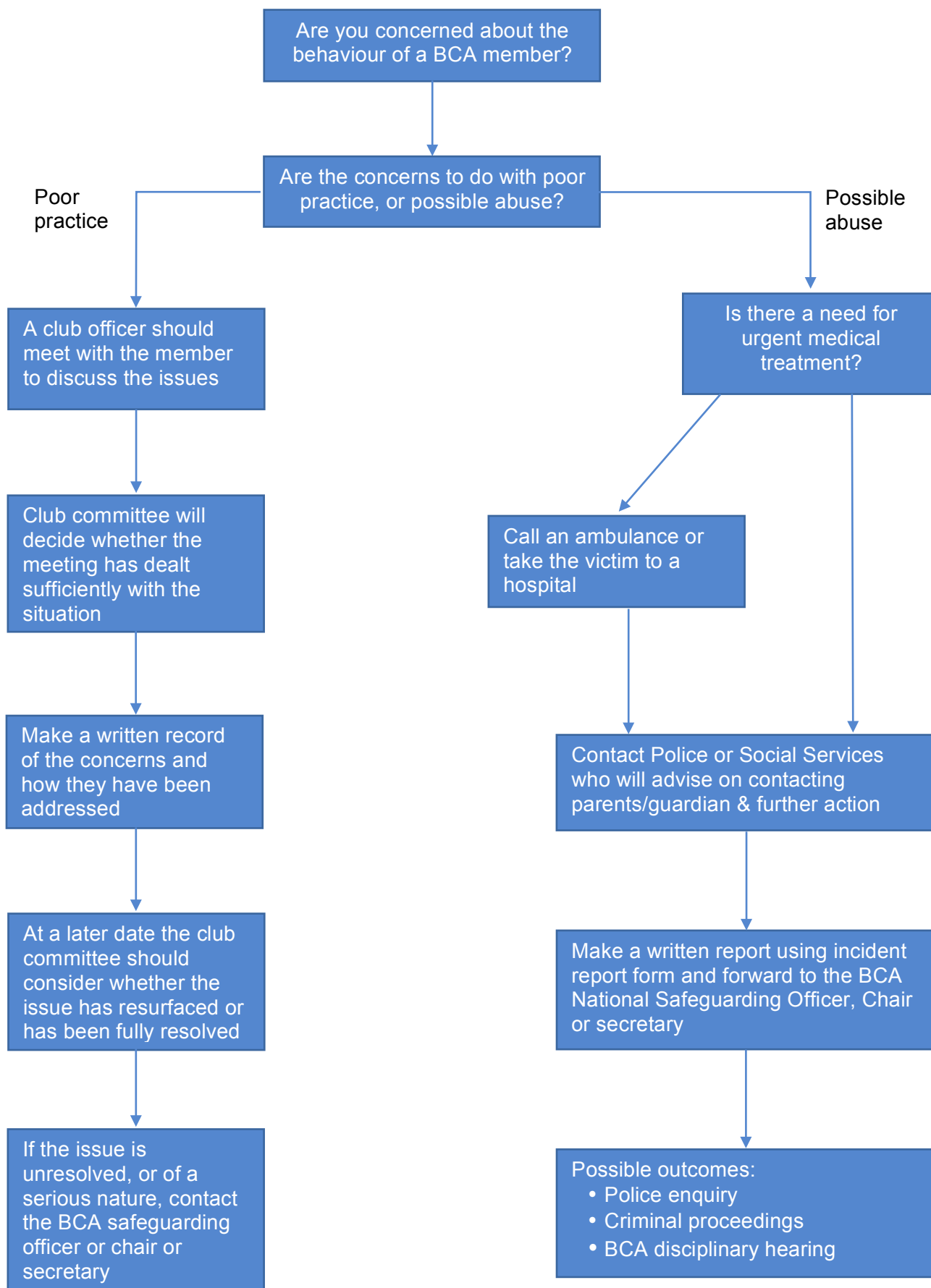
Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made a long time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children or vulnerable adults). Where such an allegation is made, you should proceed in the same manner as described above, ie make a written record and refer on to police or social services, with a copy to the BCA safeguarding officer.

Storage, Access to and Retention of Recorded Information

Information passed to the BCA in accordance with this policy must be kept securely, with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. These records are to be retained for 30 years.

Dealing with concerns, disclosure or allegations about BCA members



Concerns about abuse outside a BCA setting

If this happens you should ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult. If he or she requires immediate attention call an ambulance, inform a doctor of your concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a safeguarding issue.

If a formal referral is made make it clear that it is a safeguarding issue. Police forces have specialised Safeguarding Units which deal with allegations of abuse within the family and by people in positions of trust. In a real emergency, or if completely unsure as to what to do, telephone 999.

Parents/carers should only be contacted **after** advice from Social Services.

It can be especially difficult for children or vulnerable adults from an ethnic minority or who are disabled to disclose abuse to others. Adults should be especially vigilant with these groups and be aware that their own prejudices may block them from believing these groups. It is important to give thought as to how adults respond in these situations.

In all cases it is important that the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount and that every effort is made to maintain confidentiality.

British Caving Association

DRAFT - Safeguarding guidelines for clubs

1. Introduction

The guidance given in this document is intended to help clubs and their officers to act both reasonably and prudently in the area of safeguarding and assist them in fulfilling their duty of care.

These guidelines are an appendix to the full BCA Safeguarding Policy. There is also a 'good practice' document which we are keen for every BCA member to have read.

BCA advice and policy in this area is likely to evolve over time. If you need clarification or have any suggestions please contact the BCA Safeguarding OfficeA.

2. Overview

A quick summary of whether DBS checks are needed:

If...

1. Your club does not allow under 18s to join as members and/or attend club meets.
2. Your club allows under 18s to join as members and/or attend club meets, but only with a parent/carer.
3. Your club allows under 18s to join as members and/or attend club meets, but only with a parent/carer or an adult *in loco parentis*, nominated by a parent.

...then

These three situations are similar and your club is not required to appoint a Youth Officer or carry out DBS checks.

However when children are caving a consent form, and appropriate monitoring by the club's committee, are still important.

If...

Your club allows under 18s to join as members and/or attend meets without a parent/carer or an adult *in loco parentis*.

...then

- The BCA must be informed.
- The club and/or the officers have additional responsibilities and duties that relate to those under 18
- An appointment of a Youth Officer should be made.
- Adults directly responsible for young people, either in club premises or on caving trips, will need to be vetted, including a DBS check.

Regardless of which of the following two scenarios apply, a consent form is appropriate for youngsters to go caving, as is a system for club officers to satisfy themselves that trip leaders have the necessary skills and good judgment, and also that proposed venues are appropriate. This is dealt with in the following pages.

3. In loco parentis

A parent may give consent to anyone they wish to, take their child or vulnerable relative caving. This is an arrangement between the parent and the person taking the child or vulnerable adult. The person taking the child or vulnerable adult will be in *loco parentis* and this requires them to exercise a duty of care that would be provided by a reasonably prudent parent.

4. Consent forms and statements of participation

It is wise to use a consent form which sets out who is responsible for the child or vulnerable adult. There should also be a letter which explains the accommodation arrangements, nature of the caving envisaged and clothing required.

5. Ensuring that trips are appropriate for the participants and that adults in charge have the necessary skills

It's important that the club's committee has some governance over activities for children and vulnerable adults. To that end:

- Parents should complete a consent form, stating the needs of the child and giving a rough outline of their previous caving experience, if any. That form only needs to be completed once, not for every trip, provided that the trips are similar in nature. If a child moves to more advanced caving, parents should be made aware of the different nature of the proposed trips, and agree to this.
- An officer of the club needs to know which adult will be in charge of a trip, and should be satisfied that they are a fit person, in terms of experience, skills and temperament.
- Discussion must be held between a club officer and the adult leading the trip(s) regarding the venue(s) they propose to visit (including any backup plans). For example, a list of possible caves might be agreed, which appropriate to the children's age and experience.

6. Safeguarding policy if parents or other carers will not be present

For clubs which allow under 18s to attend meets without a parent/carer, nor a friend of the family in loco parentis:

- The club should have a designated Youth and Vulnerable Adult Officer who is responsible for safeguarding within the club. It is essential that this person should know how to respond if any allegation or concern is raised and that they should know what to do next. Full guidance is given in the BCA's safeguarding policy.
- At meets it is recommended that there is a designated person responsible for safeguarding issues. This person should be identified as such to all present – including children or vulnerable adults. They don't have to be the Youth and Vulnerable Adult Officer.
- Wherever possible, an adult should not be alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Children should not sleep in the same room as adults where separate facilities are available, unless of course they are staying with their parents.
- When both males and females are present there should also be male and female supervising adults and there should be separate male and female sleeping areas
- Those **supervising** the children or vulnerable adults and those **likely to be on their own** with children or vulnerable adults should be DBS checked.
- When children and vulnerable adults are using club premises, it may be wise for the club to notify members, especially if it is rare for young people to visit.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

Q. *I'm a BCA individual member and I offer to take my friends' 16 year old son and 17 year old daughter caving. Am I affected by safeguarding issues?*

A. You will have an enhanced duty of care to be responsible in the judgements you make above and below ground and you will be acting in *loco parentis* for the two youngsters. It's

important that your friends understand the nature and risks of caving so that they can make an informed decision about whether or not to let their children accompany you and put you in the position of being in loco parentis. You also need to consider privacy issues when they are getting changed.

CLUBS - OCCASIONAL VISITS

Q. Occasionally, I would like to take my grandchild/niece/nephew or a friend's children or a vulnerable adult with me when I attend a club meet. Can I do this?

A. Yes, provided it is permissible within the club rules. Also, be clear to have the consent of the child's parent/carer and inform them of the activities and arrangements. You will be in *loco parentis* for that particular child or vulnerable adult. And be mindful of the maximum of four days of caving permitted by insurance for non members.

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS and INSURANCE COVER

Q. A prospective member of our club wants to bring their child or a vulnerable adult on a club meet. Is that permissible?

A. Yes, providing it is permissible within your club's rules. BCA's insurance covers prospective members for caving on up to four days in a year. For any more than that, they would have to become a club member to continue to have insurance.

Q. We're asked if we can take under-18s on our mid-week caving meets. Is this OK?

A. Yes, providing it is within club rules. If the under 18 is accompanied by a parent/carer who will eventually join the club after a period of being a prospective member, or if a friend of the family will be nominated by a parent to be *in loco parentis*, then DBS checks are not required. If the club decides to allow under-18s to attend without a parent/care or adult *in loco parentis*, vetting including DBS checks, for those directly responsible for the youngster(s), is required.

Q. Can children join the club as a member?

A. If the club decides to allow child members, this is perfectly acceptable. Indeed, for children to take part in more than four days of caving in a year, they must be members in order to be covered by BCA insurance.

Q. What age counts as being a child?

A. Anyone under the age of 18.

CAVING

Q. Is our club's sign-out board sufficient for groups containing youngsters and adults?

A. See the earlier section about ensuring trips are appropriate. A club needs to be satisfied that the trip leader has the skills and judgment required, and that the likely venues are appropriate for the age and experience of the participants.

DBS checks

Q. Are our club members required to have a DBS check if children go caving?

A. Actually, it should be called 'vetting', since there is a bit more involved than just the DBS check. There are two scenarios:

a) If the child is accompanied by a parent/carer, or the parent nominates a friend of the family to be 'in loco parentis', then vetting is not required.

b) Otherwise, the club is agreeing to supervise and care for the children. In that event, vetting is required.

Q. Does everyone in the club require a DBS check?

A. No. Vetting is only needed if neither a parent nor a friend of the family are present. And even then, it's only required for those directly responsible for the child, or anyone who might be on their own with the child (which should be avoided). Other members of the club can continue to use club facilities, stay overnight and go caving, without a DBS check.

Q. What does vetting entail?

A. A few things. Firstly, proof of identity is required, for example a passport and also a couple of household bills proving your address. You then fill in an application online. Club members are not paid, so they are volunteers. Thus the DBS check is free, though the online agency we use do levy a small fee. BCA nationally will cover that fee. As well as applying for the DBS check, members should join the free 'DBS update service' which would allow the BCA safeguarding officer to verify their status at a later date, but only with the member's permission. In addition to the DBS check, two very short references are required to confirm that the member is a fit person to look after children in a caving context.

Q. How do we go about getting DBS checks done?

A. Contact the BCA National Safeguarding Officer who will send full details. Expect the process to take several weeks at least, so plan well in advance.

Q. Can we accept a copy of a DBS check that a member has from another organisation?

A. We can only re-use a DBS certificate if that person has already joined the 'DBS Update Service' and gives permission for the certificate to be verified online. Online verification may be done either by the BCA National Safeguarding Officer, or by a club officer. A copy of the original certificate, together with a printout of the result of the online verification, must be kept.

Q. We are aware of concerns about a member, outside of a caving context, that could imply issues if children are using club premises or going on meets. What should we do?

A. This becomes relevant if the concerns relate to children and vulnerable adults. In the event that children or vulnerable adults are going to use club premises or go on meets, the club's officers need to ensure that they don't come into contact with that member. This is a sensitive issue and there are a range of solutions. For example, the member could be asked not to use the club hut that weekend, or the youngsters could avoid the hut and go caving directly. Club officers need to recognise that safeguarding has to take the priority in decision making.

HUTS AND NIGHTS AWAY FROM HOME

Q. We have Family Rooms within our club hut where children or vulnerable adults are allowed to share a room with their parents. Is this permissible?

A. Absolutely. That said, the club and its officers do have a duty of care, for example to make parents/carers, together with children and vulnerable adults aware of known hazards and risks.

Q. I believe that when a parent – or an adult acting in loco parentis - accompanies a child, they can make decisions about the sleeping arrangements that might be available for that child or vulnerable adult. Is this correct?

A. Yes. If possible, both parent/specified adult and child or vulnerable adult should be happy with the arrangements prior to the trip taking place.

If you are acting in loco parentis it is wise in these circumstances that in addition to obtaining parental consent, you make clear to the children and parents before the trip precisely what the sleeping arrangements are likely to be in the hut (or on the campsite). If the parent, child or vulnerable adult or you as the in *loco parentis* adult are not happy or not satisfied with the arrangements it is best that alternative arrangements are found or that the child or vulnerable adult does not go on the trip.

Q. *Children have so far very rarely used our hut. Some members get a bit rowdy in the evenings. What should we do?*

A. It would be a good idea to let other hut users know that there will be children or vulnerable adults present. If the club's membership are keen to encourage participation by children and vulnerable adults, it might be wise to develop a short code of conduct for members.

SUPERVISED GROUPS AT CLUB HUTS WITH UNDER 18s AMONGST THE GROUP

Q. *I believe that when a school or youth group is allowed access to a club hut, it is wise not to allow members of the club who have nothing to do with the group to use the hut?*

A. BCA thinks that club members can still use the building, provided:

- The club must ensure that the children have rooms that have no adult members in them, for example by putting a notice on the door saying it's reserved for the school, and by advising members in advance.
- Club members about whom there are concerns that would relate to children (even if outside a caving context), must not use the hut at that time.
- Club members who do use the hut should have respect to the needs of the children, for example by being reasonably quiet at very late hours.
- The agreement with the school or youth group must state whether other club members are allowed to use the facilities. The school or youth group must advise parents of what the arrangements will be.

DRAFT - Good practice for adults caving with children and vulnerable adults

When planning activities for children and vulnerable adults:

- Consider the needs and capabilities of everyone in the group, and plan activities that are appropriate. For example, avoid trips that are overly physical or too wet, given the age and experience of your group. Aim for them to have fun and want to come back for more.
- Ensure that children and vulnerable adults are wearing clothing, footwear, helmet and lighting that are appropriate for the caving environment.
- Ensure any other equipment (for example, harnesses) is appropriate for the size of the participant and in good condition.
- Carry a first aid kit and spare light in your group. If doing vertical caving, carry a spare rope of the length of the tallest pitch, so that rescues can readily be effected
- Ensure children and vulnerable adults cave in an environment where risk is kept to a minimum. For example, experienced adult cavers will sometimes traverse a cave passage at a high level when progress lower down is difficult or impossible, confident that their caving skill will prevent a fall. Children and young adults are unable to make that judgment. Thus you should pick venues where such risks are minimised, or use traverse ropes or safety lines that you might not bother with when caving with adults.
- Do not allow children or vulnerable adults to cave when injured, if the injury could be made worse or could impact their ability to cope.
- Think about arrangements for changing. Children and vulnerable adults are less able to think ahead, so if a change of clothes or a towel might be needed, check that they have these things.
- Motivate children and vulnerable adults through positive feedback and constructive criticism.

During activities with children and vulnerable adults:

- Ensure that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness as well as with equality.
- If physical support is required, for example when tackling an awkward section in a cave, ensure the individual is aware of what is happening and has consented to this physical help. If possible, ensure that your help is visible to other members of your group. Avoid physical contact that could be misconstrued, for example helping with a climbing move by pushing on someone's bottom. In some situations, other children or vulnerable adults in your group may be better placed to provide help, under your supervision.
- Explain why you are doing something and try to facilitate, as far as is practical, an open and inclusive approach to the activity. People often respond better if they feel they are part of the process.
- Respect children's and vulnerable adults' need for privacy when changing. For example, they could change inside a vehicle, or maybe they could stand at the back of a vehicle whilst adult members stand at the front.

Avoid:

- Taking children and vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, or spending time alone with a child or vulnerable adult. This might become necessary in emergencies, or if a youngster has to leave a cave before the rest of the group. In such an event, maintain a respectable distance (for example by sitting them in the back of the vehicle) and ensure that their parent or guardian is aware.

The following must never happen:

- Taking a child or vulnerable adult alone to your home.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- Doing things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult that they can do themselves.
- Allowing allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, not acted upon or not recorded.
- Allowing children to consume alcohol or take illegal recreational drugs.
- Allowing any physically rough or sexually provocative, contact or games.

DRAFT - Good practice for clubs

BCA is keen to encourage young people and vulnerable adults to go caving with clubs. Clubs may of course decide not to invite children and vulnerable adults to use club facilities or take part in club activities. If clubs do decide to let youngsters and vulnerable adults participate, BCA advises the following.

- Put safeguarding on the agenda for the club committee on an annual basis.
- Ensure that all children and vulnerable adults are either accompanied by their parent or carer. Alternatively, ensure that the parent has nominated an adult who will be responsible for their child 'in loco parentis'. Best practice would be for parents to sign a very short form confirming this in writing (a sample copy is in the appendices). This adult would be someone that the parents already know, not a member of the club that they've just recently met.
- A few clubs may wish to do activities with young people, when neither their parent nor a friend of the family will be there. In that event, clubs will need to 'vet' members who will be responsible for the children. Vetting will consist of a DBS check (which BCA will arrange and pay for), plus a few supporting documents including references. See the full Safeguarding policy for details. Clubs unsure about these options are encouraged to contact the BCA's safeguarding officer for help.
- Consider adopting a policy that when children and vulnerable adults will be using club facilities, other users who have booked in at the same time will be notified. This is to address the fact that some behaviour in club facilities can sometimes be appropriate when only adults are present.
- Ensure that all members have been given a copy of this 'good practice' advice, and provided with a link to the full BCA safeguarding policy.

DRAFT - Good practice: BCA

The BCA is responsible for its Safeguarding Policy and implementation. Individual clubs who are involved with children and vulnerable adults are required to work within this guidance. They are also encouraged to produce their own guidance and ensure that all members are aware of procedures and guidelines for good practice.

The BCA recommends that every club involved with children and vulnerable adults should have a designated Officer for youth and vulnerable adults. This person should ensure that the club is familiar with BCA and current guidance.

The BCA will publicise its Safeguarding Policy to show its commitment to providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults.

Clubs are advised to follow the BCA procedures contained within the Safeguarding Policy in the event of an incident.

Parents should be clear what the BCA or a club are doing and that the activities are being run in relation to accepted good practice. The BCA provides a consent form which ensures that parents are aware of the proposed arrangements. Clubs may amend the consent form to reflect their arrangements. A copy must be forwarded to the BCA's national safeguarding officer before being sent to parents.

The BCA and clubs will develop and promote their anti-bullying policy.

British Caving Association
DRAFT - Consent form: children and vulnerable adults

Confidentiality and data protection: the information given on this form will be shared with:

- a) The club's committee member(s) responsible for supervising the activities
- b) The specific adults who are providing the activities
- c) Only if necessary, other agencies such as the BCA national council or local authorities, if safeguarding action or medical treatment are required

Name of child or vulnerable adult:

Age: Date of birth:

State any medical conditions they have, and any medication they take:

.....
.....

State any dietary requirements:

State any special needs, and in the case of vulnerable adults, what their vulnerability is:

.....
.....

Please describe how much caving they have already done, if any, and give the names of the caves visited if you know them.

.....
.....

Supervision – please tick one of the three statements below.

The first two options imply that you, or a close friend, will look after your child whilst they are caving or in club buildings. In this event, the club will not vet adults using a DBS check.

☐ Either myself or another adult member of my family will be present to supervise and care for our child or vulnerable adult

☐ I am entrusting the care of my child or vulnerable relative, to a long-term family friend who will act on my behalf. The name of that adult is:

.....

☐ I am entrusting the care of my child or vulnerable relative to the club, and I understand that the adults who are directly caring for my child will have been vetted, including a DBS check.

Accommodation

If staying overnight, I have been informed about the nature of the accommodation and the likely sleeping arrangements.

Medical consent

In the event of illness or an accident requiring emergency hospital treatment, I authorise the adult named above, or a club member if the club is taking care of my child/relative, to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital authorities.

Signed: Date:

FSE delegate report to BCA council 6th October 2018

FSE Membership

The FSE comprised a membership of 31 countries in June 2017. However, at the end of last year Albania, dropped out, due to non-payment but Georgia & Armenia have joined. This year Turkey withdrew due to political turmoil in that country, we are currently at 30 members for this year's General Assembly Meeting (GAM).

Disputes between internal organisations in member countries continues to take up a considerable amount of the bureaus time, with two organisations claiming to be the only one who can represent that country in the FSE. Only after time-consuming e-mailing exchanges, internal coordination within the FSE Bureau and repeated checks in the FSE archive can a resolution be achieved. We are currently in this position with Serbia.

Information & Publicity.

The FSE Facebook page, updated regularly by Henk Goutier (Netherlands), is continuously visited by thousands of cavers and non-cavers thus representing an excellent outreach for European speleology. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/eurospeleo>. Also, with the help of our partners of the WikiCaves organisation keep the FSE website updated on a regular basis. The FSE newsletter has been well received thanks to the hard work of Michael Laumans (Germany). The FSE has also published a Privacy Policy which was adopted unanimously by the GAM.

The work of the ECPC commission

The FSE, through the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) is now a member of the Board of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) in Brussels and thus directly involved in the EEB decision making working with EU commissioners and the different directorates within the EU. The ECPC has direct input into two working groups, 'Bio-diversity' and 'Water'. FSE will be actively supporting the International year of Caves & Karst 2021 an initiative led by the UIS. A current topic receiving much attention and debate internationally has been the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). A technical committee has been established to 'classify' or 're-classify' Karst nomenclature. It would be useful to know what the BCA stance on this will be when more information is available. - for details see EuroSpeleo Newsletter from July 2018 (page 4) available in French and English at the FSE website. ECPC has recommended that all FSE member countries contact their national ISO delegate to become involved/influence the work of this Committee. An Action Team of the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) has been formed to assist FSE members with all related questions.

The European Cave Rescue Commission

The post of chairperson for the ECRC is now held by Ms. Antonia Vlaykova from the Bulgarian Federation of Speleology (BFS) UK cavers are actively involved in this commission and the Thailand rescue work has helped consolidate work of the ECRS.

The International Caving Expeditions database (ICE db)

Treasurer Henk Goutier maintains the contact with WikiCaves. The ICE db is steadily growing. The idea is to provide all speleologists with data and contact information about caving areas world-wide. This is done in collaboration with the UIS. All reports of EuroSpeleo Projects are now also available on the WikiCaves website. WikiCaves currently provides major translation assistance e.g. for the FSE Newsletter

General Assembly Meeting of the FSE(GAM) 2018

The GAM for this year was held on 25th August. The Speleological Society of Ebensee together with the Austrian Speleological Association and their partners hosted the GAM in Salzkammergut, Upper Austria. This was the 12th Eurospeleo Forum organised in Europe. The meeting was attended by 20 countries which represents a good turnout. Full details of the meeting and decisions can be found in the GAM minutes on the FSE web site.

Eurospeleo Projects

Considerable work is invested in maintaining the system of sponsoring European projects, such as the EuroSpeleo Projects (ESP), the EuroSpeleo Forums (ESF), as well as the EuroSpeleo Protection Label (ESPL). One of the long-standing official partners of the FSE, Beal Ropes, has withdrawn their sponsorship but fortunately, the FSE projects officer acted quickly and managed to secure a contract with Sacid-Korda's from Barcelona who are now the FSE's new rope sponsor. Also, Aventure Verticale (AV) have reduced their contract which has resulted in substantial changes to FSE guidelines and the applications for ESPs, ESFs and the ESPLs. The new guidelines can be found on the FSE website.

Work continues to encourage more applications from the UK.

Timetable of Eurospeleo events & General Assembly Meetings over next 3 years that involve the FSE.

ES Forum 2019 will be in Dryanovo, Bulgaria, September.

ES Forum 2020 will be in Burgos, northern Spain, August.

ES Forum 2021 will take place at the UIS Congress in Lyon, France.

The main issue from the FSE GAM for the BCA may be the ISO 's proposal to reclassify Karst

Ged Champion

FSE Delegate for the BCA.



Main passage of C7 lava Cave, Krong No Volcanic Geopark, Dak Nong Province, Vietnam - the longest lava cave of SE Asia (EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2017-10).

Photo: Takeshi Murase (assistance: René Haemers).



This Newsletter is issued by the Bureau of the European Speleological Federation (FSE)

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ISSN 2418-4500

Editorial

The newsletter informs you of all upcoming events and includes reports of EuroSpeleo Projects supported by FSE and its Official Partners, as well as a disputed Chinese initiative to standardize cave and karst research through

the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

FSE also introduces its new Official Partner for rope sponsoring, Sacid-Korda's from Barcelona.

Best regards - The FSE Bureau

Sacid-Korda's – FSE's new Official Partner for rope sponsorship

FSE welcomes Sacid-Korda's as a new Official Partner. Korda's has been an innovative enterprise since 1945. Based in Barcelona, it manufactures ropes for professional use, canyoning as well as caving. The patented TITAN system, introduced by Korda's in 2007, provides for an extra reinforcement of the rope core and ensures that the rope

will not tear, even if the rope sheath becomes severely damaged. Korda's new SUMMUM system combines previous achievements with the TITAN system. Product descriptions, videos and photographs are available at the following website <http://www.sacidkordas.com/en>

Their website is available in Catalan, Spanish and French. FSE is grateful to our Spanish colleagues from the Confederación de Espeleología y Cañones (CEC) for effectively supporting the establishment of the new partnership. Korda's will sponsor up to 6 European Projects per year with 200 m of rope.

FSE Partners



EuroSpeleo Projects (ESP) recently accepted by FSE:

ESP 2017-12
Gouffre Berger (Deep Cleaning) (Vercors, France)
ESP 2018-01
German Youth Camp (Blaubeuren, Swabian Alb, Germany)
ESP 2018-02
Expedition Sternes (Sternes Mt., Crete, Greece)
ESP 2018-03
Colloque Karst (Chambéry, Savoie, France)

20-24 August 2018

24th International Conference on Subterranean Biology (ICBS)
University of Aveiro, Campus Universitário de Santiago,
3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal International Society for
Subterranean Biology. - <http://24icbs.web.ua.pt/>

23-26 August 2018

**EuroSpeleo Forum, including EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium,
EuroSpeleo Art Exhibition, and EuroSpeleo Imagin Film Festival**
Ebensee (Austria). - <http://www.eurospeleo.at/index.html>

27-30 September 2018

24th International Cave Bear Symposium
Chepelare, Bulgaria. - <http://icbs2018.at>

27-30 September 2018

Biospeleology and Theoretical & Applied Karstology Symposium
Afrodita Resort & Spa, Băile Herculane, Romania. -
<http://www.btak.iser.ro/index.html>

3 – 6 October 2018

4th Middle East Speleological Symposium (MESS4)
Antalya, Turkey
<http://mess4.com/>

12-18 October 2018

8th Congress of the International Show Caves Association (ISCA)
Frasassi Cave, Genga, Italy. Also open for Speleologists. -
<http://www.i-s-c-a.com/event/68-8th-isca-congress>

13 October 2018

29th BCRA Cave Science Symposium
School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol. -
<https://doodle.com/poll/4zib83s43fb3fc59>

26-28 October 2018

16th International Symposium on Speleotherapy
SANATORIUM EDEL s.r.o., Lázeňská 491, CZ- Zlaté Hory 793 76. -
<https://symposium-speleoterapie.webnode.cz/>

27-29 October 2018

2018 Irish SUICRO Symposium
Burren Storehouse, Lisdoonvarna. -
<http://www.caving.ie/suicro/>

1-4 November 2018

CASOLA 2018 – “Nuvole – Clouds”.
48032 Casola Valsenio, Ravenna, Italy. -
<http://www.speleopolis.org/en/casola2018>



Coming soon: 12th EuroSpeleo Forum 2018 in Ebensee, Austria - “Connecting Science”

The 12th EuroSpeleo Forum (ESF) will take place in the Town Hall in the centre of Ebensee in the Salzkammergut (Austria). The 3rd Circular with all conference info is available at
<http://www.eurospeleo.at>

Almost 500 participants from 37 countries, including Australia, Brazil, China, Iraq, Iran, Japan and USA have registered so far. 120 presentations were accepted. Over 100 field-trips will be organized.

Within the framework of the EuroSpeleo Forum, the 5th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium, the 1st EuroSpeleo Show Cave Symposium, the 1st EuroSpeleo Art Symposium as well as a EuroSpeleo Image'In Film Festival will take place.

See you all in Ebensee!

Spéléo Secours Français: three cave rescue training courses in November 2018

SSF invites you to participate in the 3 training courses to be held between 10th and 18th Nov. 2018 in the Lozère Department, central France. The courses are: Rescue Team Leader (Rescue Technician, 10-18 Nov), Victim Assistance (10-14 Nov), and Transmission (wireless/wire broadcasting, Nicola system etc., 14-18 Nov). Languages will be French, Spanish and English. Registrations are required before September 2018. Detailed info and registration forms can be obtained from dodelinchristian@gmail.com or btourte@wanadoo.fr and from contact@eurospeleo.org.

Krong No Volcanic Geopark, southern Vietnam

At the invitation of the Dak Nong provincial authorities, an international speleological expedition targeted the lava field around Chu B'Luk volcano in the Krong No Volcanic Geopark between 21 March and 8th April 2018. The cave mapping project was mediated by the Vietnamese Geological Survey (VIGMR) and included participants from Vietnam, the Netherlands, Japan as well as Germany.

The area features the most important lava caves (pyroducts) known in SE Asia. Previous Japanese expeditions firmly established C7 Cave as the longest pyroducts of SE Asia (1,067 m long). Other long caves are C3+C4 (968 m, but segmented) and C8 (791 m).

Consequently, the local government strives to establish the Krong No Volcanic Geopark as a member of the UNESCO global Geopark network. The 2018 fieldwork was carried out in the framework of these efforts with the aim of mapping all the remaining lava caves known to date in the area.

This goal was successfully achieved. 32 caves were mapped with a total of almost 3 km of passages. This brings the number of caves known in the Krong No lava field to 49 and the total of passages to 10.1 km.

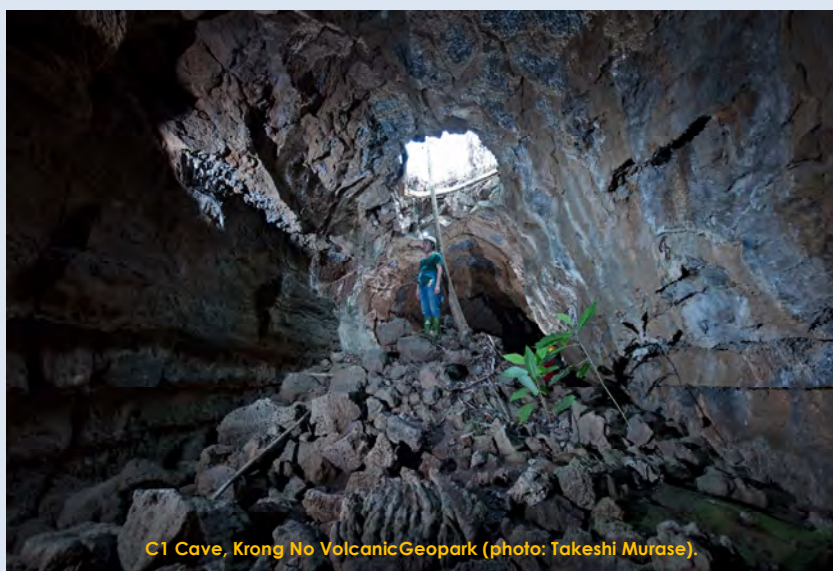
The 2018 expedition also made the first biospeleological investigations in the Geopark and supposedly discovered at least one new spider species (to be confirmed by specialists).

The expedition was awarded EuroSpeleo Project status by FSE (ESP 2017-10) and received substantial equipment support from Scurion (Switzerland). Report available at

<http://www.eurospeleo.eu/images/stories/docs/eurospeleo-projects/2017/Cave%20Documentation%20Krong%20No%20Volcanic%20Geopark,%20Vietnam%20%20ESP%202017-10.pdf>



Entrance of C7 Cave, Krong No Volcanic Geopark (photo: Takeshi Murase).



C1 Cave, Krong No Volcanic Geopark (photo: Takeshi Murase).



CAVING EXPEDITION "SUVA PLANINA 2018"

9th-19th August 2018 / Suva planina Mountain, Serbia

This exploration project (close to the city of Niš) is organized by the Mountaineering Club "Dvig" in cooperation with the Speleological Committee of the Mountaineering Association of Serbia. Interested parties can obtain all the relevant details by sending a request to contact@eurospeleo.org.



**Please send info
on all your international
events (expeditions,
congresses,
symposia etc.)**

to

contact@eurospeleo.org

ISO Technical Committee on Karst established

The International Standardization Organisation (ISO) is a private association according to Swiss law (its seat is Geneva). Members are the national institutions for norms.

ISO recommendations are not legally binding but they have a strong effect on ISO member nations. They are usually transferred into national legal norms. You may remember the ISO 9000/9001 certification for standardised business quality management, where no company could afford NOT to obtain this certificate.

In February 2018 the Chinese Institute for Standardization (SAC) proposed to create within ISO a new Technical Committee (TC) for standardization in the field of karst terminology, sustainable development of karst resources, environmental protection and management of karst environment, as well as investigation and assessment (including modelling methods and mapping of karst systems). This covers a very broad field of normative issues.

China also offered to host the secretariat of the TC.

The driving force behind the proposal is the Chinese International Research Centre on Karst IRCK/IKG in Guilin (which is recognized by UNESCO).

Karst/cave-related standards are already in place. For example, the ISCA standards for show caves and the IUCN Guidelines on Cave and Karst Protection <https://www.iucn.org/content/guidelines-cave-and-karst-protection>. There are also many existing ISO rules relating to the standards of sports equipment, something which impacts on cave rescue.

The consequences and the mandate of the proposed new TC were thus not entirely clear. In consequence, UIS and ISCA recommended to their member countries to contact their national ISO delegates and vote against the proposal.

Nevertheless, the TC was established within ISO on 23 May 2018. Sixteen ISO Delegates voted in favour, 5 against (Australia, Japan, USA, Hungary and Germany), and 17 abstained.

Decisions are now being made as to whether China will become host of the TC secretariat and what type of detailed mandate this TC will have.

Members of FSE are encouraged to keep in contact with their national ISO delegation (a list can be found on the ISO website) in order to provide expertise to any TC activities in the field of karst/cave related standard setting.

UIS encouraged its members to take the following position:

- 1) The proposal for the TC mandate is much too broad. It needs to focus on a couple of clear goals that are the most urgent and important. We recommend standards for karst hydrology studies to protect karst aquifers.
- 2) The TC should not create standards for show caves. ISCA and UIS have already done this.
- 3) The TC should not create standards for cave maps. UIS has already done this.
- 4) The TC should not create standards for terminology. Cave and karst terminology is well established internationally and standards are not needed at this time.

The FSE Bureau has discussed this advice and also recommends to all its members that this UIS position be adopted.

In case you may need documentation on the new TC pls do not hesitate to send an e-mail to contact@eurospeleo.org

**The Asian Union of Speleology (AUS)
invites to the
Summer School of Speleology,
organised by the University of Gadjah
Mada (Yogyakarta, Indonesia).**

Date: 5 – 8 August 2018

**For the program, registration, and all
other details see**

<http://speleo.geo.ugm.ac.id/>

The ECPC is recruiting

The team of the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) is inviting every caver interested in protection issues, to join the commission to help to push forward the cave and karst protection goals of the FSE.

More and more political aspects are influencing our work. Keeping caves safe from pollution and preventing them from being destroyed is a major part of the Commission's tasks.

Protecting cavernicols and speleohems are another part of the work, as well as studying the biospeleology in caves. All this has the same goal - protection of cave and karst biotops.

More team members mean more power and more presence internationally, which again will place the ECPC at a higher level of importance internationally.

If you are keen on working in a strong and international team with the aim to protect caves and karst areas, the ECPC is the place for you.

Just send an email to protection@eurospeleo.org for any contact.

Jean-Claude Thies, ECPC President

New Book: Hypogene Karst of Texas

The Texas Speleological Survey (TSS) is pleased to announce the release of a new publication: "Hypogene Karst of Texas", edited by Kevin Stafford and George Veni. This is a freely available publication provided as a downloadable PDF from the TSS website. It consists of 9 articles by a various authors describing and characterizing the diversity of hypogene karst phenomena across Texas. More information and the publication download link is available here:

<https://www.texasspeleologicalsurvey.org/publications/Monograph-Hypogene.php>

UIS Report to Council

Since the last council meeting there has been a UIS bureau meeting in Austria, coinciding with the European caving convention. Although I was unable to attend, I did to speak with the UIS Executive a few days before and have spoken by Skype with the UIS President George Veni since the meeting.

The major challenge tends to be getting UNESCO to agree to an International Year of Caves and Karst in 2021. It is now accepted if this does not happen there will either be a UNESCO Day of Caves and Karst, or, an unofficial way of recognising caves and karst in a manner yet to be decided.

The subject of what caving organisation within a country should represent that country came up yet again, it is an ongoing problem and has been since UIS was originally set up. If, as in Greece or Belgium you have two organisations which are both fairly large and similar sizes, the UIS sharing voting situation is acceptable. However, in some countries there are two organisations with 95% of cavers of a country in one organisation and a small number in the other, in this case, it has always given the UIS a problem. There is currently a motion to try and get around this, but it seems unlikely to succeed in the same way others have not in the past.

I understand a very good time was had by all participants in the convention. It was a shame I could not be there.

The Secretary of the UIS was also absent as his wife is currently expecting a baby, we do wish him all the very best in that connection.

Andy Eavis
28 September 2018