



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Council Meeting, 13th April 2019

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Item 6: Chairman's Report – *Les Williams*

A quick look around the documents and reports for this meeting has shown me two things, firstly, the sheer amount of work being carried out behind the scenes by the volunteers that help support British Caving.

Secondly, that we have a lot of business to deal with in this meeting.

I hope we can get through it promptly, it would be nice to see these meetings get shorter as the standing committee's and working parties pick up the bulk of it.

Thank you all for the time and effort you put in, hopefully we can communicate better with our members so they also know how much work is done on their behalf

Item 7: Acting Secretary's Report – *Robin Weare*

During the last few months I have reviewed much of the Association's documentation and many of the administrative practices. Some of the matters which arose from that review will be evident from items which appear later in this report. Others have been dealt with.

October Council Meeting

The Executive recommends that the October meeting be a full trial of a meeting at remote locations. It is recommended that there be three locations convenient to North & North West; East & Midlands & South & South West and that the necessary arrangements are made by the Executive.

BCA Head Office

It has been agreed that the head office address of BCA and related administrative arrangements will remain unchanged, subject to annual review.

UWE Students – Marketing BCA

There were articles in the last newsletter about a project to market BCA by students at UWE. As I was unavailable at the time of the initial presentations referred to in those articles I was subsequently invited to attend a feedback session. Arising from that session 4 of the 5 student groups provided me with their presentations and agreed that I might share suitably edited versions with our P & I and Vision committees. I have done so.

Training Scheme Database

It was agreed at the October Council meeting that once the necessary checks had been completed the proposal to use Go Membership should be actioned. This has now been done and the implementation phase has started with Gethin Thomas as project manager and David Cooke assisting with IT.

AGM Weekend

Planning is quietly progressing. The YSS accommodation has been booked for the weekend and the SRT facility and the meeting room booked for the Saturday. The AGM itself and the Council meeting which follows will be held at the Horton in Ribblesdale Village Hall which is booked for the Sunday. YSS members will pre rig some local caves for use on the Saturday and will be available to guide trips if necessary. BCRA members will be running a water tracing workshop and, if that fills, there is a possible cave climate workshop as well. QMC members will be on hand to assist with SRT training.

Standing Committee Terms of Reference

The constitution includes

7.1. A General Meeting may form Standing Committees from time to time to deal with particular aspects of the Association's business and shall specify their terms of reference.

Believing that it would make sense to show the terms of reference of each standing committee on the relevant page of the website I researched the minutes of past General Meetings. At the Inaugural Special General Meeting of BCA one of the resolutions passed was

“that all officers and chairmen of standing committees etc, already in post for NCA fill the same role for BCA.”

I concluded from this that the terms of reference of those standing committees must have been carried forward from NCA to BCA and asked Jenny Potts to use the resources of the British Caving Library to establish what they were. Jenny reported back to me that she had been unable to find any NCA minutes which set terms of reference of the standing committees.

The standing committees which were carried forward from NCA and still exist are Equipment & Techniques; Publications & Information; Conservation & Access.

Terms of reference must be approved at a general meeting. With the agreement of the Executive I have suggested to the chair of each of those committees that it would make sense to deal with this at the coming AGM.

Constitutionally established national bodies

I refer to the category of membership generally referred to as Constituent Bodies and to the instruction made at my request by the January council meeting that I should research the process necessary to change the constituent body which represents Scout caving. I have done so and have advised the Scout caving representative accordingly.

Whilst conducting this research I visited and revisited the minutes to see what had gone before. Whilst I did find the original approval of ASCT I was surprised to find that I spotted no record of CHECC becoming a constituent member.

I have now fully researched the BCA minutes from inception to date. The first attendance of a person designated as CHECC representative was in June 2006, however I have found no record of CHECC's appointment.

I established from the CHECC website that it was formed in 2002 and confirmed this with one of the founders who was the first CHECC representative mentioned in BCA minutes. In practice BCA inherited constituent members from NCA when it was formed in 2004. However, CHECC is not listed as a constituent member of NCA and no mention of CHECC could be found in the NCA minutes. I am grateful to Jenny Potts who used the resources of the British Caving Library to research the NCA minutes.

If only to save a successor the time I've spent researching this I'd like to put it right and I propose that

CHECC be approved as a constitutionally established National Body (ie what is normally referred to as a constituent body) in order to formalise the situation which has applied for many years and which must have been inadvertently omitted from the minutes of the meeting which originally approved it.

If this proposal is agreed by Council I further propose that all votes in which CHECC has participated as a constituent body are declared valid.

Website

Those sections of the website which are the traditional responsibility of the Secretary have all been updated. The minutes of council and general meetings held since June 2016, previously only drafts, have all been replaced by final versions after due research. The list of member clubs has been brought up to date; the out of date news items have been removed; the contacts page and the manual of operations now reflect current appointments.

In consultation with the Insurance Manager the membership pages have been reworded to eliminate any suggestion that BCA provides insurance other than as a membership benefit.

The Treasurer's pages have also been updated.

Club membership

Before the changes referred to above it would have been possible to interpret the membership pages on the website as that we are selling insurance with the benefit of membership added.

This was particularly so in the case of the club membership application forms and related paperwork which remain under review.

We are not selling insurance to our members, we are not allowed to do so – and our insurers have made this plain. We provide public liability insurance as a membership benefit.

The wording of the individual member web pages has been updated to make it clear that we provide public liability insurance as a membership benefit and the insurance questions & answers pages are now under review by the insurers.

There remains one serious anomaly, however. We have two categories of club membership. Around 150 of our member clubs are within the category which requires all their members to be members and those clubs also have the benefit of insurance.

There is a second category of club membership which has a separate application/renewal form and for those clubs there is no requirement for all (or indeed any) of their members to be members of BCA. Those clubs do not have the benefit of insurance. There are 25 clubs in this category.

The particular problem which follows from this is that if we allow some clubs to join without insurance it could be considered that we are selling insurance to the others.

A secondary potential problem is that such clubs are not separately identified in the list of member clubs and it may well be assumed by landowners or those who control access on their behalf that a member of one of these clubs has the benefit of public liability insurance when he does not.

My personal view is that it is too risky to have that second category.

The constitution refers only to one class of club membership so I see no impediment to council deciding to eliminate that second category and require all individual members of all member clubs to be members of BCA.

Such a decision could be implemented immediately for new applicants and at the 2020 renewal point for existing member clubs, providing that a decision is taken soon.

The clubs presently in the second category would have the option on renewal of requiring all of their members to also be members and continuing their own membership on the same terms but with the attached benefits. They would also have the option of becoming Associate Members.

Radon Working Group

Council will recall that during the April 2018 meeting the change to radon related legislation was discussed in general terms during the Secretary's report and as to specifics during the QMC report and that it was agreed to set aside a budget of £500 to help support, if needed, developments surrounding the change of Radon level legislation.

Progress has been made on this by what has effectively been a sub section of QMC headed by Gethin Thomas.

It is now proposed that the Radon Working Group be reconstituted to continue this work with the budget originally agreed, if needed, and with Gethin Thomas as convenor.

It is proposed that the terms of reference of the working group be

To update the Radon leaflet to reflect current legislation

That would allow the working group to continue to carry out the detailed plans set out in the April 2018 report from QMC whilst updating the leaflet - but now reporting directly to Council.

Counsel's Advice re access for under 18s

As was mentioned at the last council meeting the requested advice had been received a few days earlier. The advice itself and further advice from Counsel concerning publication has since been considered by the Executive. The further advice concerning publication includes:

As to distribution, my understanding is that the intellectual property in the text of the advice itself remains with myself, albeit of course the actual substantive advice is yours to share as you wish. Sharing the actual document with your members who are landowners seems like a sensible option, although I would certainly do so with the caveat that it is general only - feel free to do so.

If I may offer a word of warning against wide-scale distribution and explain why I would ask that it not be made available online? I have found from experience that when people read legal information online, they (i) overly focus on the elements that accord with their own beliefs, and (ii) presume that it has specific application to their own situation

With that advice, and having now fully considered the content, the Executive provisionally decided and now recommends that the document itself should not be made public, and that it should be made available only to interested landowners on request and on receipt of a formal undertaking that it not be published, quoted from or distributed to anyone except themselves and their legal advisers.

In order to progress the specific matter which necessitated this advice it has been made available to the Chair and the legal adviser of one landowner on that basis.

In general terms the advice is that

- Waivers made by or on behalf of under 18s can be effective
- There is no distinction between married and unmarried minors
- There is no applicable element of Human Rights law

The instructions to Counsel included that, if he considered that an indemnity waiver would be effective, he should draft an appropriate wording. He has done so. It is proposed that this wording should be made available to landowners or access bodies on request.

Item 7.1: Insurance Manager's Report – *Howard Jones*

Notes from BCA Liability Insurance Policy renewal meeting

Liability Renewal:

Update certificates on BCA website completed.

Draft child abuse policy forwarded to underwriters with a note it will be discussed at BCA AGM June 2019.

Low claim rebates:

2015 rebate received in January 2019, value £2,200

2016 rebate due, value circa £2,400 received March 2019

2018 rebate has been deducted from the 2019 renewal premium.

Expedition policy:

HJJ and Andy Eavis met with Peter Hayman in January 2019. It was a useful meeting and led to further exchange of information. We met again with the proposed underwriters in London on March 20th. Andy has been working on this matter for a long time and his expertise in the area was invaluable to getting a solution. See separate paper.

Other policies: (3 small non liability policies renewed October)

Move to Howden once BCRA library cover quote received from existing brokers. **Action HJJ**

Instructor insurance:

This is a policy taken out by Caving instructors to cover themselves. Briggs the underwriter decided at no notice not to renew existing policies as they were too exposed to sport. Our brokers thought they had a solution but it fell through so as yet this matter is unresolved which is not good news. However in the last few days they think they have a solution, situation ongoing **Action HJJ**

Personal accident (Death and disability) insurance: is one of those policies which is very expensive to take out as an individual (especially as a caver) but much cheaper as a group. I asked Howdens to look at a policy for BCA members to go on top of the liability policy already in place as a member benefit. They have advised there is a policy available at a cost of £2.50 for a caver and £0.34 for a non-caver which in the event of death or disability due to a caving event would pay out £50k. Given our current membership the cost would be some £13,000, less than our surplus in each of the last 2 years.

As well as Death the following expenses would be covered:

Accident Medical Expenses: £2,500

Coma Benefit: £50 per full 24 hours up to a maximum of 104 weeks

Convalescence: £200 or £100 for Insured Persons above the age of 70

Counselling: £250 up to a maximum of £5,000 per Insured Person

Funeral Expenses: £10,000

Hospitalisation: £50 per full 24 hours up to a maximum of 52 weeks.

Paralysis: Up to £50,000

If our members don't have such cover that would respond in the event of a caving incident this is a significant and cheap member benefit.

The pay-out could be increased to £100k at double the cost, total cost to BCA of some £26k.

DECISION REQUIRED: do we want to take out this policy as a member benefit ? This decision needs to be made by the late summer BCA Council meeting as it could affect subscriptions, unless we decide to pay from reserves or the budget shows another surplus.

Insurance is a member benefit:

Robin and I have reworded parts of the BCA website under the membership tab to reinforce the fact that insurance is a member benefit and that BCA does NOT sell insurance.

Item 7.1.1: Expedition insurance for UK cavers – Howard Jones

Since the demise of the old BCRA expedition insurance scheme individuals have been able to purchase travel insurance from a number of commercial outlets such as Dogtag, Adventures, Snowcard and the BMC. However, issues remain with this situation including the following:

- 1) Is everyone on the trip insured? If a non-insured person has an accident then he or she foots the bill which could bankrupt then.
- 2) If 2 members need rescuing but have different insurers, who foots the bill?
- 3) Is cave exploration covered by the policy? Even if there is no local rescue resource?
- 4) Is there sufficient search and rescue cover in the event of a remote incident? (Who would have paid Rick Stanton et al to fly to Thailand if it had been a UK caver flooded in?)
- 5) Age limits (both upper and lower)
- 6) The ability, post Brexit, to access some foreign insurance policies.

To that end I wanted to ensure there was a UK underwritten policy for UK cavers abroad that would respond in the event of an incident on a foreign caving trip, that had realistic search and rescue cover and age limits. BCA members who are not UK residents would not be covered; they would have to find local cover.

I spoke to a number of third parties that had similar insurance policies to the one I wanted including FFS, BMC, and BCU etc. My experience of business insurance over 40 years has led me to believe that access to the under writer is key to getting a solution that works for both parties. Our brokers (Howdens) have been involved with the BMC scheme for a many years working recently with Peter Hayman of P J Hayman & Company (PJH); who not only have their own scheme (Adventures) but is responsible for the BMC scheme as well. A number of meetings were held with Howden, Peter and potential underwriters. I consulted with Andy Eavis, Nick Williams, and Robin Weare from a BCA perspective plus a number of active expedition cavers. Andy (who has been trying to find a solution for some time now) in particular has been heavily involved and has attended all meetings and calls and his input has been invaluable.

Proposed solution:

Underwriter: Antares (Lloyds syndicate owned by Qatari Insurance, turnover £500m a year, underwrite BMC scheme and Adventures), 180 employees

Active manager: PJH (Worked with BMC for the past four years and manages their scheme and claims analysis)

Broker: Howdens (as for the liability policy)

Makeup of the scheme would be similar to the BMC scheme (i.e. an adventure policy focused on caving but covering other activities too) in that a number (14) of different sections have differing claims limits. These include all the normal cover such as cancellation, lost passport etc., but most importantly focus on caving and rescue.

Scheme open to BCA members only UK resident. Worldwide cover except Iran and areas where FCO advise no go. Zoning of different regions of the world.

3 options: Expedition insurance covering all members (to be encouraged) probable discount for 20 or more members (tbc), single expedition insurance for Individuals, annual insurance for individuals who takes part in a number of activities in a year. These activities are most adventure types, mountaineering, skiing, biking etc.

Expedition cover to be flexible until just before departure to allow for changing member details.

BCRC liaison in the event of a major rescue

Definition of search and rescue will be agreed with BCA insurance manager

Commercially viable compared to alternatives, especially for exploration with no local rescue team.

BCA to receive a low claims rebate and will underwrite the first £2,500 of any rescue costs each year up to a maximum of £5,000 per annum.

GPF recognition of the expedition to be encouraged by the underwriter

Available for exploratory and non-exploratory foreign trips.

PJH will badge the scheme for BCA but do all the work. Marketing of the scheme yet to be agreed.

Over 65's more expensive to cover due to world-wide accident statistics. Cover available up to 74 years of age, beyond that by application.

The policy would not be linked to the existing Liability policy as there is no advantage to so do and although both are member benefits, one is obligatory and the other not.

Currently cave diving is not included, but once the policy is established I will try to find a wet solution too. Trying to include cave diving from the start was not practical.

Decision for GPF: is it happy with its involvement and the consequences?

Following the meeting 31/3/19, GPF happy to proceed so long as no liability attached to GPF and any low claims rebates are donated from BCA to GPF.

Decision for BCA: Is it happy to be associated with this new scheme as it will be badged BCA

Decision for BCA: Is it happy to underwrite a potential £5k each year for Rescue activities on expeditions under taken by UK cavers?

Item 7.2: Membership Administrator's Report – Wendy Williams

As at 31.3.2019

609 DIMs

Caving DIMs = 348

Caving DIMs with BCRA = 199

Non Caving DIMs = 5

Non Caving DIMs with BCRA = 57

163 Groups

with 8 Clubs not renewed yet for 2019

5141 CIMs

Caving CIMs = 4182

Non Caving CIMs = 816

CDG Members = 143

Item 7.3: Training & QMC Terms of Reference – *Alan Butcher*

Report from the informal Working Party set up to confirm Terms of Reference, membership and other matters associated with the BCA Training Committee and the BCA Qualifications Management Committee.

The working party has met three times, in November 2018 and March and April 2019. Meetings have been attended by Stefan Natynczuk (first meeting), Gethin Thomas (first and second meetings), Juliet Parker Smith (second and third meetings), Nigel Atkins (all meetings) and Alan Butcher, Chair (all meetings).

The following papers are attached to this report:

Terms of Reference for both committees (Appendix 1a and 1b)

Procedures and responsibilities of each committee. (Appendix 2 and 3)

Membership of the committees (Appendix 4)

Reporting Procedures (Appendix 5).

Associated with reporting procedures is the requirement to put in place a robust policy to deal with the media and other outside organisations in the event of a significant incident resulting in a major rescue, loss of life or a prolonged search scenario. All present agreed that the need to co-ordinate a response given through a single source would be paramount in the event of such a scenario. A proposed draft policy is attached (Appendix 5)

Maintaining Standards and Complaints procedures.

The QMC is currently re-writing a policy concerned with Professional Standards and it was also agreed that a simple procedure was required in the event of complaints arising from a BCA/Training Committee funded event.

Alan Butcher

10th April 2019

APPENDIX 1A

The BCA Training Committee Terms of Reference:

- i) The organisation of training, club and regional training events and the administration of training grants. (other than for BCA awards administered by the QMC)
- 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 good practice 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.

Agreed version 10th April 2019

APPENDIX 1B

The BCA Qualifications Management Committee (a BCA Working Group) Terms of Reference:

- i) The management of current BCA awards and qualifications including the updating and re-writing of the syllabus, updating training methods and ensuring that the awards reflect to needs of users.
- 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) Representing, within established protocols, matters of training and training process raised by any major incident involving cavers and award holders in association with the Training Officer.
- v) The QMC operates on the basis agreed by the BCA AGM and National Council.

Agreed version 10th April 2019

APPENDIX 2

BCA TRAINING COMMITTEE SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The BCA Training Committee is a standing committee of the British Caving Association.

The role of the BCA Training Committee is to assess the information and training needs of caver training for BCA members and to encourage, develop, coordinate and/or deliver responses to those needs.

CHARGE OF THE TRAINING COMMITTEE

1. Identify information and training needs of BCA members.
2. Design training workshops.
3. Coordinate caver training activities on behalf of the BCA.
4. Coordinate other training matters on behalf of the BCA, but does not include the BCA qualifications. These enquiries are passed onto QMC.

SELECTION, COMPOSITION AND SIZE OF THE COMMITTEE

1. BCA Training Officer/Chair of Training Committee/QMC rep
2. Regional Council representatives
3. Constituent body representatives
4. Co opted specialists by invitation of the Training Committee

The BCA Training Officer is appointed by the Association. Preference in the selection of the BCA Training Officer is given to individuals who possess an expertise and an active interest in the committee's activities. The BCA Executive Council must endorse the BCA Training Officer.

MEETINGS

The Training Committee is in constant communication with each other and is able to make quick decisions on training events, grants etc. without waiting for a formal meeting anymore. This Committee does meet more formally three to four times per year via web ex. The goals of each meeting are to review any training requests and evaluate training events and other committee activities.

BCA Training Grant

The training grant exists to assist training events and other requirements, which may include: venue expenses, trainer's expenses, material expenses, mailings and printing etc.

REPORTING

The BCA Training Committee produces a report at the end of every meeting, which is circulated to all members and sent to BCA. It will also report annually to the BCA Annual General Meeting.

Prepared by Nigel Atkins
For report 10th April 2019

APPENDIX 3

Role of QMC

- To operate, develop and administer the Awards Schemes, LCMLA and CIC (latter with advice/guidance of CIC Panel)
- Develop written resources to support award holders, trainer assessors and the general caving community
- Support trainer/assessors and award holders and represent their interests to the BCA, including access agreements nationally and regionally
- Approve the appointment of trainer/assessors for the schemes via regional panels, and establish and operate a continuing validation and approval system for trainer/assessors.
- To deal with applications for exemptions from formal assessment
- To ensure all trainer/assessors are current in best practice by arranging Trainer assessor workshops and disseminating information via a range of communications
- To ensure enable award holders are aware of current developments by arranging Update Workshops at suitable intervals
- To maintain and disseminate knowledge of best practice in caving and mining esp. related to instructing/coaching and related technical matters.

Prepared by QMC
For report 10th April 2019

APPENDIX 4

Chart showing Training Committee & QMC structure and membership.
Appended as a separate document at the end of these reports

APPENDIX 5

BCA, Training Committee and QMC - Reporting procedures for Incidents, accidents and near misses.

A formal reporting protocol will be adopted by both the Training Committee and QMC to deal with incidents, accidents and near misses in caving.

In the event of a serious incident, both the Training Committee and QMC will adhere to the formal BCA Media Policy for the handling of such incidents with the various forms of media outside the caving world.

For other incidents, accidents or near misses both the Training Committee and QMC will agreed a mutually acceptable basis for the sharing and response to information in this circumstance. Such responses shall seek to inform and provide feed-back both for those involved with training and, where appropriate, the wider caving world. It is considered inappropriate to be judgemental in such circumstances.

BCA Serious Incident Policy.

In the event of a serious incident, accident, rescue or similar where the media and outside authorities are involved, the BCA Secretary shall immediately advise the Training Committee, QMC, Council members and all others who may be involved that all requests from the media shall be directed through the Executive and that, where appropriate, a spokesperson shall be nominated to speak on behalf of all parties.

A written statement/s should be prepared, in association with outside authorities where appropriate, circulated as necessary and used when speaking to the media.

The Training Committee and the QMC and their members may be asked to become involved but shall always act through the executive.

Alan Butcher

For Report 10th April 2019

Item 7.4: Safeguarding Officer's Report – *Chris Boardman*

My apologies - I am not able to attend the forthcoming council meeting, nor the AGM, since I will be abroad for both. If we do manage to have a remote attendance option for future council meetings, that will be very handy!

I recently attended a two-day Safeguarding Officer course at the NSPCC national training centre. This was specifically to improve my understanding as BCA safeguarding officer.

If taking under-18s caving, or supervising them overnight, those directly responsible for them will need a DBS certificate unless they are accompanied by a parent, or by someone responsible for them who already has a DBS certificate, for example if they are accompanied by their teacher, youth worker or Scout leader.

I can arrange for DBS certificates and have set up an online account for this. Clubs should contact me when they want to get one.

The safeguarding policy is about much more than the DBS checks. For example, I establish the principle that a club officer should agree that the venue is suitable for the people in the party when under 18s (or vulnerable adults) are caving. The good practice guidelines and

safeguarding guidelines for clubs are the two most important documents to read, rather than the safeguarding policy itself which is really just the formal wording.

Despite me being away for the AGM, I am very keen for the AGM to consider the proposed safeguarding policy (and associated documents) with a view to adopting them formally as BCA policy. BCA's insurers require that we have a policy and at present it is only in draft form. To that end, council members (and all BCA members) are encouraged to read the proposals and to contact me if you have any suggestions for changes or improvements.

Item 7.4.1 Proposed policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders to supervise young people

The British Caving Association (BCA) will from time to time need to recruit suitable adults to supervise young people, either whilst caving, or when using accommodation. Almost always this will be a voluntary, unpaid activity.

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the BCA complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

The BCA undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

The BCA can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that the BCA are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended).

The BCA can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

The BCA is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The BCA has a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process.

The BCA actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.

The BCA select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

The BCA ensures that all those in the BCA who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.

The BCA also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, the BCA ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

The BCA makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request.

The BCA undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Item 7.4.2 Proposed Policy on the correct handling and safekeeping of DBS certificate information

Introduction

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the British Caving Association complies fully with the code of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificates and certificate information.

It also complies fully with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

Storage and access

Certificate information should be kept securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

To note: those registered care homes which are inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), those organisations which are inspected by Ofsted and those establishments which are inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) may be legally entitled to retain the certificate for the purposes of inspection.

In addition, organisations that require retention of certificates in order to demonstrate 'safer recruitment' practice for the purpose of safeguarding audits may be legally entitled to retain

the certificate. This practice will need to be compliant with the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and incorporated within the individual organisation's policy on the correct handling and safekeeping of DBS certificate information.

Usage

Certificate information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep certificate information for any longer than is necessary. This retention will allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints, or be for the purpose of completing safeguarding audits.

Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Item 7.4.3 Proposed Bullying and Harassment Policy

Introduction

The British Caving Association (BCA) is committed to providing an environment free from bullying and harassment. We aim to ensure that all members are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. This policy covers bullying or harassment including online, on caving trips, at caving-related events or members' social functions. This policy applies to all members at all levels.

What is harassment? Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". Harassment also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past. It is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 to harass a person because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It also includes conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment). Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- unwanted physical conduct including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour;
- offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content or the display of offensive materials;
- unwanted jokes, banter, mocking, mimicking or belittling a person.

What is bullying? Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying can include the use of personal strength or the power to coerce through fear or intimidation, not necessarily from someone in a position of authority. Bullying may be physical, verbal or non-verbal. It can include conduct that is not face-to-face, including via text message, email and social media.

Examples of bullying include:

- physical or psychological threats;

- overbearing and intimidating behaviour;
- inappropriate or derogatory remarks about a person on social media;
- persistently picking on people in front of others or in private;
- regularly and deliberately ignoring or excluding members from activities or social events;
- regularly making the same person the butt of jokes.

Breaches of this Policy

Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in BCA and all members are required to treat each other with dignity and respect. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Serious cases of bullying or harassment may lead to termination of membership. Members who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith is unacceptable and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to action under our disciplinary procedure.

If you believe you are being harassed or bullied, you may wish to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. Explain the situation and how it has made you feel. It can be helpful to describe the event so the other person is clear about your concerns. Use the opportunity to ask the person to change or stop their behaviour. Alternatively you may speak to a senior member of your club, regional council or BCA who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If you do not feel that informal steps are appropriate, or they have been unsuccessful, you should raise the matter formally under our grievance procedure. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with our grievance procedure. If we consider that there is sufficient evidence to suggest you have been harassed or bullied we will consider the appropriate action to take. If the person accused is an employee, this may include invoking our disciplinary procedure. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person concerned.

Children and Vulnerable Adults

For some children or vulnerable adults bullying can be taken to the extreme and can make their lives intolerable. Bullying is something that needs to be taken very seriously. It is not acceptable for adults to dismiss bullying as a simple part of growing up. There is sufficient evidence to show that the consequences of bullying can be devastating both to the victim and their family.

There are three main types of bullying:

- Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking or theft
- Verbal, e.g. racist or homophobic remarks
- Emotional, e.g. persistent negative feedback.

All these will include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim.
- A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victims.

In a caving context emotional bullying is most likely to be found rather than physical violence. For example:

- Unwanted peer pressure from other cavers to attempt caves that are too hard or dangerous for the members of a party
- A parent who pushes too hard
- A caver who intimidates others

It is the responsibility of all adults, children and vulnerable adults to treat one another with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness. All involved should be prepared to:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children or vulnerable adults to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, but do not promise that you will not tell anyone else.
- Keep records of what is said (e.g. what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the appropriate person in charge and club officers, and ensure that the BCA Safeguarding Officer is informed.

Item 8: Acting Treasurer's Report – Howard Jones

Current bank balances: as at 31/3/19 was £328,000. Of which £252,500 is in medium term interest bearing accounts and £40,000 is in a short term deposit account (see below)

New short term deposit account:

I have opened a new bank account with Redwood bank. It pays 1.35% interest on 35 days' notice. I opened the account by placing £40,000 from the HSBC current accounts. HSBC were offering 0.2% interest! I will try to manage the bank accounts such that we earn maximum interest and hence will hold as little as practical in the current accounts. So if you want any large bills paid please give me as much notice as possible.

Low claim liability insurance rebates:

2015 rebate received in January 2019, value £2,200

2016 rebate due, value circa £2,400 will be received April 2019

2018 rebate has been deducted from the 2019 renewal premium.

Budget adherence:

Membership numbers as at 31/3/19 were around 95% of full year 2018 which suggest that our income should be as budget. Liability insurance rebates in 2019 should be circa £4,500, which is windfall income unbudgeted for. To date I have no knowledge of any item of expenditure that is going to be materially over budget.

Regional accounts:

DCA submitted their accounts for 2017 for review by the other members of Fin Com. Their accounts were thus scrutinised and accepted. A claim of £791.60 was paid for 2017.

Cambrian submitted their accounts for 2017 for review by the other members of Fin Com. Their accounts were thus scrutinised and accepted. A claim of £588.00 was paid for 2017.

BCA 2018 accounts:

Robin has done 98% of the work preparing these. They are complete and have been sent to Paul Ibberson (GPF Treasurer, former BCA Treasurer) for review before presentation at the AGM. They currently show a surplus of £18k for the year compared to a surplus of £20k in 2017. Asset value is £254k.

Investment of cash surplus:

BCA had cash of £250k as at 31/12/18 and today has cash of over £300k. The £250k is invested in 3 medium term deposits with banking or organisations and is earning some 1.5% interest per annum. Hence our bank interest is expected to be around £3k per annum. The organisations invested in are backed by government guarantee up to £85k. **Does BCA have an appetite to invest elsewhere to get a potential higher rate of return?**

Short term bank deposits are as low as 0.1%. Medium term around 1.5%. Longer term deposits (5 years plus) would attract higher rates.

There are other investment vehicles called structured deposit products (pension funds use them as part of a portfolio) that reward growth in (say) FTSE 100 movement. They are backed by merchant banks (Goldman Sachs for example) and are backed by guarantee up to £50k. There are different flavours but one current option would work like this:

Invest up to £50k in a plan. 7 years later the plan pays out 2.5 times the growth in the FTSE 100 index since investment. No growth, £50k returned, i.e. no loss. If FTSE has grown say 10% in the 7 years then the return would be 25% or £62.5k returned. If BCA wanted its money back during the 7 years then there is a second hand market, though the value is not guaranteed of course. If BCA has an appetite to earn more than 1.5% interest on a no loss basis then it is suggested that £50k is invested in a structured product(s), investment decision to be made by HJJ and Paul Ibberson (GPF Treasurer) and Robin Weare.

Donations:

Have paid GPF £6,000 for their entire 2019 donation and BCRA £3,000 being a quarterly library donation in March 2019.

Feedback from GPF meeting 31/3/19:

A well run meeting with an atmosphere of mutual respect so it was a pleasure to attend. 11 expeditions applied, 131 members total costs £181,000. Despite GPF having over £100,000 invested, low returns means their contributions alone would be a drop in the ocean. The ongoing donations from BCA are vital to help continue to support this enterprise, for which they expressed their thanks.

Loaning money to University clubs:

Following the principle being agreed at the October 2018 Council meeting, I have agreed a process with Botch we were both happy with, so this can now proceed.

Thanks to Robin Weare:

This is my first Treasurers report and it would be remiss of me not to recognise the help and advice I have had from Robin in my new role. His hand over and wisdom has been invaluable to me.

Proposed BCA Funding of Regional Councils (Adopted April 2019)

1) Introduction

This document describes BCA's funding of the Regional Councils as administered by the Finance Committee. It does not cover the grants that maybe available from other BCA Committees or National Council that will be awarded according to their own criteria and rules.

2) Principles

- 1) To ensure the funding is spent for the benefit of BCA members.
- 2) That the best value for money has been achieved.

3) Finance Committees Responsibilities

- 1) To follow the above Principles.
- 2) To establish that the funding has been spent and has been spent as designated.
- 3) To give clear and timely information as to what will be funded.
- 4) To fairly allocate the available funds.

4) Regional Councils Responsibilities

- 1) To follow the above Principles
- 2) To produce externally scrutinised Accounts. NB scrutinisation is a less rigorous version of auditing.
 - a) The Scrutinisation must establish that the money has been spent and is allocated under the appropriate heading.
- 3) To apply to the Finance Committee for funding, providing sufficient information to substantiate the claim.
- 4) To administer payments to and claims from Clubs, Access Bodies and other third parties.

5) Process of Funding

- 1) The Regional Councils present their claims, including Scrutinised Accounts, to the Finance Committee. These claims are to be submitted as soon as possible following the end of the year in which the expenditure is incurred. The deadline for submission is to be the March BCA Council meeting; if final figures are incomplete at that point, an estimate is to be provided in order that the prior year's BCA Accounts can be finalised. All actual claims values are to be submitted by 31 December following the year of expenditure. BCA will be under no obligation to fund claims which are not submitted within this timescale.
- 2) The Finance Committee review the claims at its mid-year meeting.
- 3) The BCA pays by bacs to the Regional Councils for agreed amounts.
- 4) The above process is in arrears. There is the facility to be paid a float if cashflow problems are anticipated.
 - a) The Regional Council requests a float.
 - b) The Finance Committee reviews and grants an appropriate float.
 - c) Once the cashflow situation has improved the Regional Council should return the float.

6) Regional Council Accounts

- 1) Each Regional Council can present the Accounts in their own chosen format so long as they meet the requirements below.
- 2) Accounts are to be scrutinised.
 - a) The Scrutinisation must establish that the money has been spent and is allocated under the appropriate heading.

- 3) Accounts should set out so that allowable and non-allowable expenditure under the various cost headings (Running Costs / C&A, etc.) can be easily identified, possibly as notes to the main accounts.
- 4) The Finance Committee reserves the right to request to see the supporting documentation to the Scrutinised Accounts (cash book, receipts etc.).
- ~~5) The Accounts should include a breakdown of membership by type. (BCA member and non member clubs, Individuals (CIMs, DIMs, Non-BCA)~~
 - ~~a) Some costs are pro-rata'd according to membership type.~~
- 6) An analysis of the expenditure reimbursed to each Funded Access Body should be available so that allowable and non-allowable expenditure under the various cost headings can be easily identified. (See Access Body Section below)
- 7) A link from the relevant section of the BCA website to the regions website should show the latest set of accounts available.

7) Implementation

- 1) Funding is to be spent for benefit of BCA members.
 - a) The running costs of a particular Regional Council (photocopying, postage, room hire, stationary, phone bills, and travel expenses of officers to meetings) is deemed to be to the benefit of all BCA members since there are councils for all regions providing similar benefits.
 - b) The test for C&A funding is that access is available to all BCA members clubs. This is a minimum, access should be as wide as possible.
- 2) BCA pays Regional Council's for actual expenditure. Any money paid in advance will be taken into account once the scrutinised accounts are available.
- 3) Where there are other external sources of funding, these should be used first.
- 4) Funding is paid once the work is done. Generally this means that payment is in arrears.
 - a) NB there is a procedure to avoid cash-flow problems.
- 5) Generally materials will be funded, volunteer labour will not.
- 6) Competitive quotes are required for commercial work.
- 7) Activities that make a profit will not be funded.
- ~~8) Costs incurred by Regional Council Members who are not BCA members or Regional Council Individual members who are not DIMs will not be funded.~~
 - ~~a) This applies to CSCC and DCA. Typically postage and stationary costs will be pro-rata'd accordingly.~~
- 9) Costs are paid according to the accounts, except for C&A.
 - a) C&A expenditure up to annual total of £750 per year is paid according to the accounts.
 - (1) This removes the bureaucracy for day to day C&A work.
 - b) C&A expenditure above £750 should be presented as projects
 - c) The figure of £750 is to be reviewed annually.
- 10) Clubs or Access Bodies that incur costs on behalf of the Regional Council will be paid by the Regional Council. The Regional Council can then claim allowable costs from BCA.

8) Projects

- 1) A project is an identifiable parcel of work.
- 2) If authorised in arrears the project might not be fully funded. For example if it doesn't meet the Principles or BCA doesn't have the budget.

- 3) To authorise a project it should be presented to the Finance Committee. The information will include a brief description and a detailed estimate or quote giving the costs.
- 4) The Finance Committee will make a decision and inform the Regional Council.
 - a) Since request for project authorisation can occur at any time a 'virtual meeting' via email might be required.
 - b) If appropriate the Finance Committee will consult the relevant BCA Committee for advice.
- 5) A progress report needs to be made to the Finance Committee annually.
- 6) Incomplete projects need to be re-authorised annually. This is so that the Finance Committee can budget.

9) Access Body Funding

- 1) An Access Body can apply to the Finance Committee for funded status via their Regional Council. The Finance Committee will judge each application on its merits.
- 2) Access Body funding is via their respective Regional Council
- 3) Funded Access Body expenditure is included with their respective Regional Council expenditure and processed in the same way using the same procedures.
 - a) An analysis of the expenditure reimbursed to each Funded Access Body should be shown as a note to the Regional Council accounts, broken down by cost heading (Running Costs / C&A, etc.).
 - b) The FAB's C&A expenditure can be presented as a project or be counted towards the RC's £7500 allowance.
 - c) FAB's travel expenses are not paid.

Appendix 1. Allowable Funding By Cost Heading

1) Meetings/Running the Organisation

- 1) Payable on the scrutinised accounts.
- 2) Allowable: Photocopying, Postage, Room hire, Stationary, Phone bills, Officer travel expenses to meetings.
- 3) Not Allowable: Member travel expenses.

2) C&A

- 1) Up to £750 per Regional Council per year is paid for C&A according to the accounts.
- 2) C&A expenditure above £750 should be presented as projects (see above).
- 3) Allowable: Negotiating access to caves and mines, Gating of entrances, Stabilising entrances, Working with landowner to maintain access, Payment of "peppercorn" rents for access, Other liaison and public relations work related to maintaining access and promoting conservation.
- 4) Not Allowable: Digging as part of a new exploration.

3) Publications & Information

- 1) Payable on the scrutinised accounts.
- 2) Allowable: Publications for all BCA Members. Access Information (Handbook/Guides or Newsletters), Cave Registry
- 3) Not Allowable: Publications primarily for the Regional Council Members (Newsletter, Handbook), Publications sold to make a profit, "Regional" (Area) Guide Book, Topo sheet, Bolting Guide etc, Participation in events to promote caving, Publicity.

- 4) Newsletters if are of general interest and participation in events to promote caving would be funded via the P&I committee or Training committee if eligible under their criteria and would not come under the remit of Finance Committee.

4) Insurance

- 1) BCA provides Public Liability cover for all persons (including officers, members, *key holders*, volunteers and land owners & their employees) involved in activities on behalf of the Regional Council and Funded Access Body activities, public liability cover for land owner access agreements
- 2) Not Allowable: Insurance other than BCA's scheme.

5) Website

- 1) Payable on the scrutinised accounts.

Allowable: BCA provides basic webs services (Domain, Hosting). Regional Web services other than those provided by BCA.

- 2)

Not Allowable: general web services not linked to BCA or Regional websites.

6) Training

- 1) Grants are available for all types of training events for "recreational" cavers from Training Committee.

7) Equipment

- 1) Allowable:
 - a) Eco Anchors and Resin will be provided for free by the Equipment Committee for sites where all BCA Member Clubs have access.
 - b) Grants are available to cover the costs of the instructor and consumables for training (including refresher training) in the placement of eco anchors from the Equipment Committee.
- 2) Not Allowable: Eco Anchors and Resin where not all BCA Member Clubs have access.

Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report – *Andrew Hinde*

The C&A committee has agreed (via e mail discussions) a draft of its Terms of Reference as required by the BCA Manual of Operations. This is with the BCA Secretary and will be put to the AGM. It is reproduced here.

- To produce guidelines and promotional materials to encourage conservation of underground environments;
- to assist regional councils when requested;
- to campaign nationally to encourage conservation and improved access in line with BCA policy and constitution; and
- to undertake other conservation or access related work as may be agreed by the committee.

C&A Standing Committee Standing Orders.

The C&A committee will shortly begin the process of adding to the standing orders for standing committees (approved by the 2012 AGM.) This project will be led by the next C&A Convenor with assistance from the C&A Committee. It may even be ready by the time of the AGM in June (It does not require ratification from an AGM)

Team Access meeting.

The BCA C&A Committee were represented at this meeting by Louise Baddeley and Tim Allen. Their report follows.

Report on the 'Team Access Meeting' hosted by British Canoeing at their offices at the National Water Sports centre, Nottingham.

This invitation came about through the work of the BCA CRoW group in developing relationships with other similar outdoor organisations. It is hoped that these meetings will take over where the Access Forum run by the Sports & Recreation Alliance left off some years ago. The meeting included attendees from British Canoeing, BMC, Ramblers, British Horse Society, Sport & Recreation Alliance, Wildlife & Countryside Link. Attending for BCA were Tim Allen (standing in for Andrew Hinde) and Louise Baddeley.

The aim of the meeting was; to share current priorities; to expose common threats and opportunities; to identify potential for future joint work; to share experience and knowledge. Each NGO introduced their organisation and spoke of current priorities and projects. BCA was made very welcome but it was clear we were the minnow organisation amongst much larger friends. We were the only volunteer representatives present and consequently our limited resources meant we were unable to offer much scope in return. Representatives of all the other organisations were professionals in their fields. Our aim was to listen and learn and continue to develop relationships which can only benefit British Caving going forward.

The first session focused on the Agricultural Bill and was presented by Dan Pescod of WCL. With the UK leaving the EU Common Agricultural Policy the Agriculture Bill is intended to replace it. We are promised a greener Brexit with payments to farmers and landowners in future being for 'public goods' which include access to the countryside. At the heart of the Bill is ELMS, the Environment Land Management System which the government will develop to deliver the new approach. At present the Bill is in the long grass awaiting the report stage and the outcomes of Brexit itself. For the last year some of those present had spent their entire time lobbying, consulting and working on proposals towards the new Bill. One of the big sticking points was how to value public access in terms of payments. British Caving can clearly benefit here but we are reliant on much better resourced organisations to press the case.

The second agenda item was on the Environmental Bill which was again presented by Dan. The Bill will set out environmental standards to replace those used to make policy in the EU. The government's stated ambition is to leave the natural world in a better condition than it found it in. The Bill will supposedly place into law the long term ambition of the 25 year environmental plan. The Bill seemed to be a long way off yet. It may well improve protections to the underground environment but equally could enhance threats to access. One to watch. It was very noticeable that all the other organisation were 'greening'. The BMC will be plastic free by the end of the year. British Canoeing have tied their new access campaign into cleaning up our waterways, with all organisations striding to be more environmentally friendly.

The third item was a briefing by Ryan McCulloch of the SRA on Brexit and Sport. His briefing focused on the difficulties sports and activities might face in the event of a no deal. It was pretty depressing with no good news at all. Louise has since posted on Ukcaving details of the likely problems which could affect cavers (ahead of March 29th). Copied below.

The final item introduced British Canoeing's new access campaign titled Clear Access Clear Waters. This is a new initiative which links access to waterways with cleaning up the waterways. It is an impressive strategy with big names, glossy brochures and plenty of lobbying. Even so there are conflicts with other users and the likelihood of success is difficult to gauge. The discussion looked at campaigning ideas and advice from round the table which was very useful and also how best to train, encourage and mobilize volunteers.

As volunteers ourselves, Louise and I both felt it well worth the effort to attend. The group hope to schedule further meetings later in the year and invite other organisations. I hope BCA C&A will continue to engage with the group.

Appendix 1

Informative post on Ukcaving aimed at deseminating the SRA advice ahead of 29th March.

I apologise for introducing the B-word to what I'm sure is an otherwise lovely carefree evening for

Last Wednesday me and Badlad attended everyone...a meeting in Nottingham with the aim of elucidating how Brexit may effect outdoor sports, on behalf of the BCA Conservation and Access Officer. This was well attended by other governing bodies including the Ramblers, British Canoeing, the BMC, the Sport and Recreation Alliance and Wildlife and Countryside Link as well as the BCA. Aside from discussing and bemoaning other aspects of Brexit and British politics in general during the course of the meeting, one of the main discussions focused on how Brexit might affect travel to EU countries to carry out our sports. As I'm sure many cavers will be travelling to Europe in the coming months (whether this is to cave, climb, ski or just lie on a beach) I thought it might be useful to provide a summary of the discussion, which was headed by a representative of the Sports and Recreation Alliance.

The following applies from 29th March in the case of a no-deal Brexit:

To travel to EU countries you must have a passport valid for 6 months or more from the date of your return. If you do not have this when leaving the UK you will not be allowed to leave the country.

- Pre-planned internal European flights by UK airlines may not operate, even if you have bought a ticket. E.g. a British Airways flight from Frankfurt to Madrid will not operate.
- Pre-planned internal UK flights by European airlines may not operate, even if you have bought a ticket. E.g. a Ryanair flight from Glasgow to London will not operate.
- In order to drive a UK car in an EU country, you will be required to apply to the home office for a 'green card' to prove you have valid insurance. It may already be too late to do this due to the application time required, if you plan on driving immediately after the 29th March. E.g. taking the ferry or Eurostar to Calais with your own car.
- Your freedom to transport sporting equipment across the border from UK to EU countries will depend on the countries you are travelling to - it is advisable to check the import rules of any countries you are travelling to before you travel.
- Sporting insurance may vary country to country requiring you to take out multiple policies if you plan on crossing country borders between EU countries during a trip. E.g. a ski trip crossing borders between France and Switzerland may require two insurance policies to ensure you're covered at all times during your trip.

In the case of a deal being accepted ready for EU withdrawal on 29th March

There will be a transition period so nothing will change immediately. However over time some of the above stipulations may come to apply, especially the rules about driving in the EU, transporting sporting equipment, and insurance.

This information was given by the Sport and Recreation Alliance and I have done my best to report it accurately. However if you are planning on travelling to Europe on or after 29th March it is probably worth going to their website to get more info. They have also created a podcast: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/241221/929407-episode-2-brexit>

Additionally, we all know what a shambles British politics is at the minute, so all of this is completely subject to change depending on deal/no deal/no brexit/general election etc etc etc.

...and lets just not think about the Irish border...

Louise Baddeley - SUSS/BCA

I have nothing further to report

Item 10: Youth & Development Officer's Report – Rostam Namaghi

No report

Item 11: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report – *Mark Sims*

Testing of the alternative resin (Fischer FIS EM Plus 390) and anchor (Climbing Technology Glue-in anchor) combination mentioned in the previous report to council is ongoing. For a variety of reasons, it is not feasible to use the resins recommended by CT. This is not prohibitive to their use, but it does mean more testing is required than if it was not the case. Extraction loads for this anchor-resin combination seem more than sufficient, but effective extraction methods are being sought and further tests in limestone are being carried out prior to proposals or recommendations being made.

The E&T group has also looked at the results of the tests described in the rope test officer's report and views have been forwarded to the exec.

Additional projects mentioned in the previous reports to the council meetings remain ongoing.

Item 11.1 Rope Test Officer's Report – *Bob Mehew*

Last November, Training Committee requested some help with testing several safety line set ups. This followed questions over the extent to which the pulley and toothed ascender and the STOP set ups for progress capture or life lining could withstand shock loading. Some work was carried out on the Bradford Pothole Club's rope test rig (for which we are grateful for permission to use it) on 8 January. One point emerged which was of sufficient concern to propose that a warning message was issued to cavers. A draft was sent to the Executive on 31 January. A formal response is still awaited though the state of discussions indicates the proposal was not supported.

A report has since been issued by N Atkins, G Thomas and myself on all of the work to the Equipment and Techniques, Qualifications Management and Training Committees on 2 April. It contains 6 recommendations:

1. The Equipment & Techniques, Qualifications Management and Training committees should consider whether toothed ascenders are no longer used as "progress capture" devices for life lining/belaying.
2. BCA should recommend that the pulley and toothed ascender set up outlined in Diagram 1 should no longer be used.
3. QMC should discourage the use of the STOP for planned belaying activities.
4. QMC should consider further testing with the STOP descender using a dynamic rope connection system to understand its limitations for use as an improvised belay device in an emergency/unplanned activity.
5. QMC should highlight to instructors the impacts observed when using low stretch EN 1891:1998 rope to belay; highlighting the need to maintain a tight rope at all times if using EN1891 low stretch rope, or consider the use of dynamic rope within the system.
6. BCA should consider setting up a service of monitoring new and changes on manufactures' devices so as to provide alerts to BCA members of significant changes

(Recommendation 2 being the warning message.)

Item 12: Training Officer's Report – *Nigel Atkins*

Work in Training Committee has continued in a positive fashion. A series of region based workshops has been arranged to take place this year. The meetings with the informal Training/QMC working party chaired by Alan Butcher have concluded in a manner satisfactory to all parties. We are grateful to Butch for his patience and understanding.

BCA Training Officer

The BCA Training Officers terms of reference and duties have been looked at and will be presented to the AGM in June.

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.

BCA Statements & Training Techniques

BCA needs to make a statement about the use of equipment that looks to be out of scope with manufactures images, half loaded stops, mini traxions etc. This needs to come from 1 main source of training in BCA that crosses TC and QMC/CIC panel.

Access for BCA Trainers and assessors

As BCA Training Officer I have applied for cave permits for use in the CIC scheme and I have obtained them for LC/MLA training and assessment too. All good.

BCA Training Grants and how they are awarded

TC members expressed concerns about giving out grants after events had taken place. There were also concerns raised about funding first aid training. I had put an idea together about running first aid workshops for cavers that did not require any BCA grants. These would also have a follow up day so that those interested could complete the full 16-hour first aid qualification.

It was agreed that all training grant applications be sent to the regional training officers who would look after training events in their regions. Any clubs and organisations falling outside regions with a training officer could apply directly to the BCA training officer.

The TO was concerned that if training events had a small uptake at the beginning, cancelling them due to low numbers is never a good thing. Dave Baines and myself came up with a framework for approved personnel to run events so that they do not need to be cancelled. This is based on training committee members who are willing to run events for 1 person upwards for a low fee. Any event that needs someone outside training committee to run will be offered the same conditions. The costing ideas were looked at, discussed and adjusted slightly to fit with a good compromise. Ratios were also agreed at 1 to 4 for technical training and 1 to 6 for workshop type events. Other ratios will be agreed on new topics coming in.

This new system will come into place on June 1st 2019.

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.

Item 13: Acting Publication & Information Officer's Report – *Les Williams*

A P&I Meeting was convened on 9th April and is reported here:

Media Liaison role

It was decided that the present arrangements, whereby phone enquiries are routed through Hucklow then forwarded on to either Andy Eavis or David Rose was the best arrangement. Emails will forward to both.

We also determined that a media pack was not very practical as it would only contain generic information and any press contact was likely to be specific. It was noted that media organisations would already have access to stock images of caves and caving, so there was no point in replicating that work.

It was considered that a log of enquiries and contacts should be maintained by the Media Liaison team so that Council can see the number and type of enquiries, and that a list of useful media contacts could be compiled.

BCA Promotion

Promoting BCA was discussed and we determined that we would have a look at improving on the Descent adverts to promote what the various parts of BCA do for the members, and wider caving community. This will need the support and assistance of the various "departments" of BCA.

It was suggested that BCA needs to update its image and to this end we discussed the logo. It was decided we should present a portfolio of images for the AGM to consider.

P&I Committee also decided to support the "New to Caving" leaflet that was started by Jane Allen, and we will be looking at the content and finalising this after the AGM once the potential Logo redesign is concluded.

Website

Dave Cooke presented a report on his consultation concerning the website. The consultation showed that everybody had differing ideas about the website and it was determined that there was scope to change some parts of the site, but that it was important to keep the content. We will be looking at improving the style and layout of the site, with an emphasis on a more friendly "landing page" and some improvements to menu structure and images to make navigation easier.

Newsletter

The Newsletter was discussed, the Editor said he intends to produce 3 editions per year. P&I were happy that it seemed to be a useful output from BCA but were dismayed that there is still quite a poor uptake on distribution.

Proposed Terms of Reference

These were discussed at length and the draft is presented here:

The prime function of the P&I Standing Committee is to ensure that all publications BCA are accurate and legally, morally and grammatically compliant and that BCA copyright is protected. It will also bring together representatives and individuals with interest and/or expertise to facilitate the following facets of the BCA, as well as considering what areas within these facets the BCA should be developing in the future:

- ***Website***
- ***Social media***
- ***Publicity***
- ***Promotion and marketing***
- ***Publications***
- ***Media liaison***
- ***News***

13.1 Media Liaison Officer's Report – Andy Eavis

Again, the media situation has been dominated by the Thai rescue. In addition, there was a reception by John Bercow the Speaker from the House of Commons, followed by a reception at the Thai Embassy on 30th November.

The BBC wanted more information and they were passed onto John Volanthan and Jason Mallinson.

The Guinness Book of Records approached and wanted information to suggest that the Thai rescue was the largest cave rescue ever mounted. I talked to them on the phone and I think they decided not to progress.

Sky News wanted an interview in connection with Pride of Britain. Bill Whitehouse from the British Cave Rescue Council handled this.

CNN in China were interested in an article reference "The biggest cave chamber in the world" and this was passed to Richard Walters who had recently been laser scanning in China.

An adventure sports journalist approached in November wanting more information, this was passed onto Jane Allen and I think ultimately fizzled out.

I was invited to do an article on Oman for the Anglo-Omani magazine which was published in the autumn.

Walker George Films approached who were interested in doing something more on Thailand and they were passed to Emma Porter of the BCRC.

An American TV company VFX were interested in doing something on large chambers and they were passed onto Richard Walters.

The Daily Mirror approached reference an article they were doing on the Thai rescue. I replied, but Dave Rose beat me to it. Dave and I have since worked out a protocol where we don't both reply to the same enquiry. Whenever possible, he will communicate with me before replying, I, in turn will send him information, to go in the newsletter etc.

A Japanese TV company was passed onto Ric Stanton.

Nathan Smith, a Manchester psychology research worker was interested in post expedition psychology and that is an ongoing project. It also went to Ghar Parau Foundation who are also looking at it.

Mike Webster, a Scottish film maker is doing another piece on the mental health benefits of adventure sports and Mike was passed on to Steph Dwyer.

Finally, I was approached by Ellie Hudson of publisher Penguin Books who have produced a book called "Underland" by author Rob MacFarlane. They wanted some publicity for this, and I passed the enquiry onto Dave Rose.

Clearly, from this report, it is interesting that a lot of approaches are by telephone and the emails want people to respond by phone. Also, the idea of three people responding simultaneously to anything coming in for BCA media is difficult. Now Jane Allen has resigned, it's simply down to Dave Rose and myself. Dave will try and resist responding before discussion!!

I would definitely like to stand down as Media Officer at the forthcoming AGM.

Item 13.2 Newsletter Editor's Report – *David Rose*

The last issue came out at the end of January. I am planning another for May, in good time before the AGM. As always, I welcome contributions – please send them to me asap!

Item 13.3 Webmaster's Report – *David Cooke*

P&I Website Proposals. The former P&I Officer criticised the website, wanting change. I'm open to change but there is a process to follow. It starts with talking to the Webmaster. That didn't happen. There needs to be a description of the changes wanted and there needs to be a meeting to discuss them. That didn't happen either.

What did happen was that the P&I Officer unilaterally commissioned a replacement website, the first of which I knew about was during the last Council meeting. In a voluntary organisation that relies on teamwork that is no way to run a Committee. I think resignation was the honourable and appropriate response.

Website Feedback. This is about BCA's primary domain (british-caving.org.uk). I asked for feedback from Council members on the website. Thank you for your response. A summary is below. The new P&I Officer convened a meeting at which the website and the feedback was discussed. No clear specification emerged other than it was about aesthetics which of course is entirely subjective. What actually needs to happen is for some decisions to be made about what

the website is for. Who is the target audience? What do they want from the website? Up until now it has been an information site primarily aimed at existing members and the work of the Committees. Do we now want to extend that to a more marketing roll, selling BCA to our members, selling caving to the wider public?

What I have taken away from the feedback is that the background images should be removed and that the menu should be redesigned.

BCA Website Feedback Apr 2019

	Count	Sum WW TR	IW	MS DR MR	SF HB	TA JP	Friend	TA		
1 General layout	1	-1								
3 Background image	5	-3		-1	-1					
4 Menu structure	8	-8		-1	-1			-1	-1	-1
5 Have banner on the homepage linking to New To Caving	3	3		1	1					
6 Home page	3	-1		1	-1		-1			
7 Site content	6	0					1		1	
8 Stick Figure	2	-2					-1			
9 Require professional help	2	0						1		
10 Replace News with a link to the Newsletter	2	2						1		
11 Purpose of website is to provide information	2	2							1	
12 Should sell BCA membership	2	0							1	
13 Favicon	1	-1							-1	
14 Text readability	3	-3			-1				-1	
15 Layout of Membership Renewal Form	1	-1							-1	
16 Needs a team	1	1			1					
17 Attracting Newcomers	1	-1								

- 1 The library web page is pretty good and simple I like it.
- 1 So, beware of the "babies and bathwater" type of changes.
- 1 Way too much text
- 1 Contact BCA- like the layout, lots of clear info
- 1 Like the look of the library and conference pages at first glance
- 3 I struggle to see what the background image really is
- 3 I think it does give the page a dated look
- 3 The pictures serve no purpose, being plastered over with text.
- 3 [want] few words, lots of white space to set off inspiring photos
- 3 I like the background images as they don't distract from what I want to search for
- 3 photo looks dated
- 4 having designed a few websites myself I do understand the problems
- 4 Hard to find what I want from the main menu
- 4 There is an awful lot of information on the BCA web site which does need to be there for members but it does not need great prominence - located more on the 'back end'
- 4 I think there's a lot of content and organisational changes that would make the BCA website more efficient for end users.
- 4 There do seem to be lots and lots of menu options and you probably have to know what you want in order to find it
- 6 The piece about Cadw has been overtaken by events ...
- 6 In short there is nothing on the front page worthy of front page promotion except the minimal impact leaflet reprint
- 6 The main problem is with the home page, which seems to consist of random items and is heavily text-based
- 6 The home page should inspire, therefore it should be more visual with great images.
- 6 Home page content out of date
- 6 Important to have both technical and accessible caving images - kids etc
- 6 As many others have stated it is the 'front end' of the website which needs the most change.
- 6 It needs to inspire, be appealing and modern, inform as to what we do, encourage engagement, draw people in and direct them to their areas of interest.

- 7 It works really well and has all the content required it just needs to work for less internet savvy consumers.
- 7 one of the main issues is the lack of updated content
- 7 it would be good to have more information on some of the sub committee
- 7 It is possible to find all the documents you could ever require
- 7 Membership page [snip] Nothing on there about benefits of membership- what are we buying into when we join?
- 8 Logo produced in someone's bedroom on MS paint 25 years ago
- 9 before commissioning a redesign, we need to think carefully about exactly what the site needs to do. It may well be that what are needed are relatively minor tweaks, not radical change.
- 11 I am coming round to Rostam and Cookies arguments about the actual purpose of the website being to provide information
- 12 I think it does need to be used more as a marketing platform for membership, not just to persuade people to join us, but to actually convince/maintain with current members that the work we do is worthwhile being a part of!
- 14 Remove red text over brown/grey/black backgrounds as it is hard to read
- 15 [Have] a simple questionnaire that adds or subtracts from a bill, in a decision tree.
- 16 needs a multi-disciplinary team to author and run it
- 17 the existing setup isn't an "exciting website" which newcomers to caving would find instantly attractive
- 17 The social media platforms are more suited to evangelising caving.

Item 14: Qualifications Management Report – Juliet Parker-Smith

QMC continues to function as an efficient and productive working group, managing and administering the BCA instructor and leader award schemes. Administration is ably handled by Mary Wilde, who is employed by the BCA on a part time contract; all other positions are voluntary. The group comprises: Chair, deputy, representation from Council, training officer, regional ALOs, CIC panel reps, voluntary sector rep and AHOEC rep. At the last meeting we welcomed Chris Boardman, as the new council rep, who replaces Nick Williams.

Formal meetings occur three times a year, but work is ongoing, with CICs voluntarily producing resources and sub groups looking at current issues which could have an effect on instructed caving.

Terms of Reference

- As a result of confusion arising from the differing functions and format of QMC and Training Committee during 2018, a working group was established comprising of personnel from both groups, to clarify the situation and develop terms of reference for each. I feel confident that we have successfully completed this task – reference: Alan Butcher's report. Professional standards and reporting procedures for each body are 'a work in progress', with the need for the sharing of information regarding any incidents which may occur, having been identified as essential. During these discussions we also identified the need for a formal BCA media policy which both parties would adhere to, in the event of serious incident.

Resources

- QMC continue to liaise with the various CIC holders who have offered to write resources to accompany our award schemes. It is intended that these resources will be available on the website for use, not only by award holders, but the caving community in general. The first of these – Level 1 rope-work – endorsed by the P & I officer, has been uploaded onto the website. Others which are being prepared include: Geology, Hazards and Risk Assessment, Conservation and Level 2 rope-work.

New CIC trainer assessors

- With the loss of Nigel Ball and Dena Proctor from our bank of CIC cave and mine trainer/assessors, we have sent an invitation to all CIC holders to apply for these

positions. Prior requisites are stated in the CIC handbook, along with a scoring matrix for the shortlisting process. The shortlist comprises of three candidates for each of the mine and cave assessor positions. Interviews will be held on April 15th.

Data management system

- After endless hours and months looking at suitable options for a data management system to support the overall management of the BCA award schemes, we have finally signed up to 'Go Membership', the system which has been adopted by each of the regional canoe NGBs. With the contract signed, we're now into the set up phase – where the real work begins! There's a 2 month period before we go live, during which we'll need to satisfy ourselves it's fit for our purpose. It is not a bespoke product, however there are additional 'bolt on' elements that may be desirable to us. We have a demo version running and Gethin, Mary and Cookie are looking at this with the view of populating the system and trial running. We're at a very early stage, however it does look promising. My concerns now are that time is of the essence; Mary's administrative time for running the scheme will no-where near cover the time needed to upload data onto the system from our three existing data bases, thus it is clear that we will need additional clerical support for this to be completed within the time frame.

Leading on from this, the administrative changes will make the 'long overdue' re-write of the award scheme handbook essential. It is already embarrassingly out of date, with 'up-dates' almost being more voluminous than the handbook itself!

It is hard to calculate how many extra administrative hours may be needed, but at the last 'up-date' of the handbook, Mary recorded 45 extra hours. Bearing in mind that we are now looking at a re-write and uploading all data from three separate data bases onto the new system, I think we are looking at multiplying this time by at least 4. There will also be travel expenses for QMC volunteers involved in the re-write and data base set up.

QMC accounts have been separated from training committee for the past two years and in each of these years, we have shown a profit:

QMC accounts per BCA annual accounts

	2,018	2,017
<i>Income</i>		
Registration Fees	9,295	9,460
Up-date Courses	10,875	9,593
Trainer/Assessor Fees	2,748	2,755
<i>Total</i>	<u>22,918</u>	<u>21,808</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Employment Expenses	9,447	7,574
General Expenses	3,420	3,160
Travel	832	1,804
LCMLA/CIC Courses	8,402	7,131
<i>Total</i>	<u>22,101</u>	<u>19,669</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>817</u>	<u>2,139</u>

Radon

In January 2018, new legislation came into effect dictating acceptable radon exposure in the work place. The impact of this has been the cause of much confusion for our award holders, thus a small working group headed up by Gethin Thomas, was set up to communicate with Public Health England, HSEs specialist radiation adviser and representatives from each region delivering the award scheme (as well as NAHMO) to try to establish pragmatic and accessible advice to those working within the BCA award schemes, in managing their exposure to radon. This is best done through researching and producing guidance on sampling (with assistance from the appropriate statutory bodies such as PHE) and various levels of monitoring to ensure staff are not exposed to excessive levels of radon.

QMC's AHOEC rep requested funding from that organisation to enable purchase of some monitors and I recently spoke to the AHOEC chair, who pledged funding (£1,200) for the purchase of 50 monitors - stage 1 of our research.

As the potential detrimental effects of radon are not confined just to leaders and instructors, a 'wider' working party has now been suggested. Thanks to Bob Mehew, whose knowledge has been invaluable.

Technical issues

In previous council meetings, the training officer has highlighted uncertainty regarding use and suitability of some equipment which had been used for 'progress capture' and/or life-lining in the past; seemingly some manufacturers have changed the advice given. This led to discussion at QMC about the advice that TAs should be giving to award holders. On the back of this, Gethin Thomas, Bob Mehew and Nigel Atkins embarked on some work looking at the shock loading of some safety line set ups and Gethin and Bob have written up their findings, with recommendations. Work continues, as does communication with Petzl and other equipment manufacturers. In the interim, we have advised TA's to follow manufacturers guidelines, with Petzl rig and ID being proposed as suitable belay devices and suggesting that toothed jamming devices (which are designed for hauling) are unsuitable for belay purposes. We are also looking into alternative appropriate devices from a range of other manufacturers which is proving informative.

Item 15: CRoW Working Group Report – *David Rose*

The entire political world has, as members will know, been consumed by Brexit. It has been almost impossible to talk to any of my political contacts in recent months on any other subject. Until the situation becomes clearer, this is unlikely to change. For the time being, therefore, there is nothing to report.

Item 16: Vision Working Group Report – *Hellie Adams*

The vision group had it first meeting since the last council meeting. Using Skype we set out some guidelines for us moving forward and also discussed the questionnaire, which has lots of food for thought. I have attached the summary Rostam compiled as well as our minutes. We have set up and are using slack. We plan to have another meeting in May. We feel we are starting to move forward but that so far a key issue remains that people really do not understand the BCA and I hope some of the things Jane put forward will make it into circulation as we really do need to do some 'self promotion'.

The only thing that I would like to raise is about the website. It has been suggested that this being changed should wait for the vision group but I feel this is a P & I issue. The questionnaire suggested that it is a major issue many people have with BCA and that it should be a top priority for the new P and I officer to be a number one task for 2019/2020 not a vision group thing - apart from feeding back information we have received.

Appendix: Preliminary Report of the BCA Vision Questionnaire

Compiled by Rostam Namaghi

Aims & Introduction

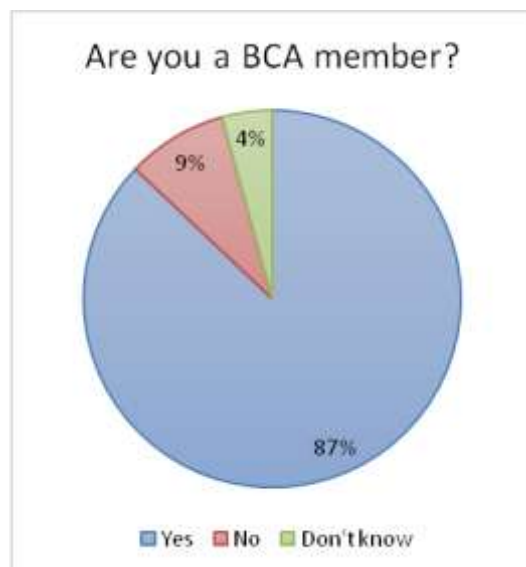
A questionnaire was created by Helen Adams on behalf of the BCA Vision and Constitutional Reform Group. Its purpose was to inform the working group on what the membership thought about the BCA and whether any improvements could be made.

Method

The survey was initially distributed as a request to email, advertised in both the BCA newsletter and on UK Caving. Owing to the cumbersome nature of returning the survey in this format, a Google form was created and widely distributed. A post was put up on UK Caving, Facebook (and was subsequently shared to many groups) and Aditnow. Data collection was open from the 02/02/19 to the 01/03/19 and 314 responses were obtained, only 10 of which were inappropriate and removed from the data analysis. Data was automatically collected and stored in a .csv file and initial analysis was done with Microsoft Excel.

Results

Please note that where specific numbers have been omitted this is due to the relatively small dataset and the ease with which respondents could be identified if the numbers were included.



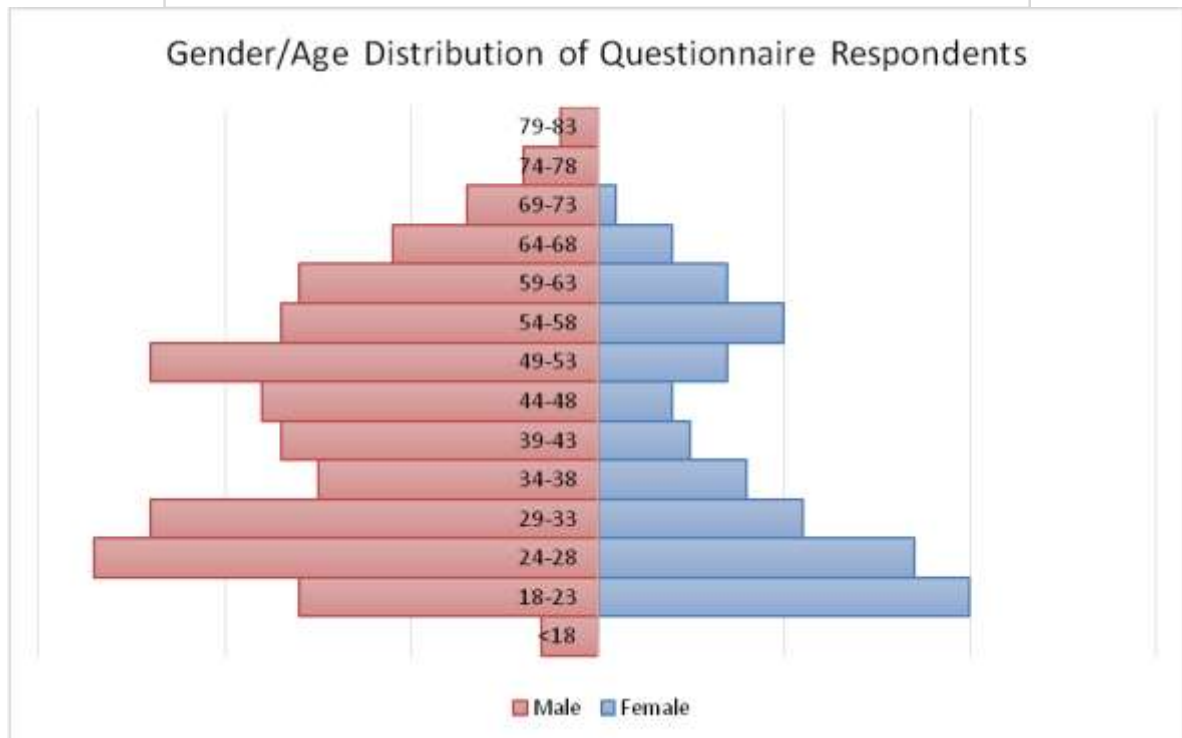
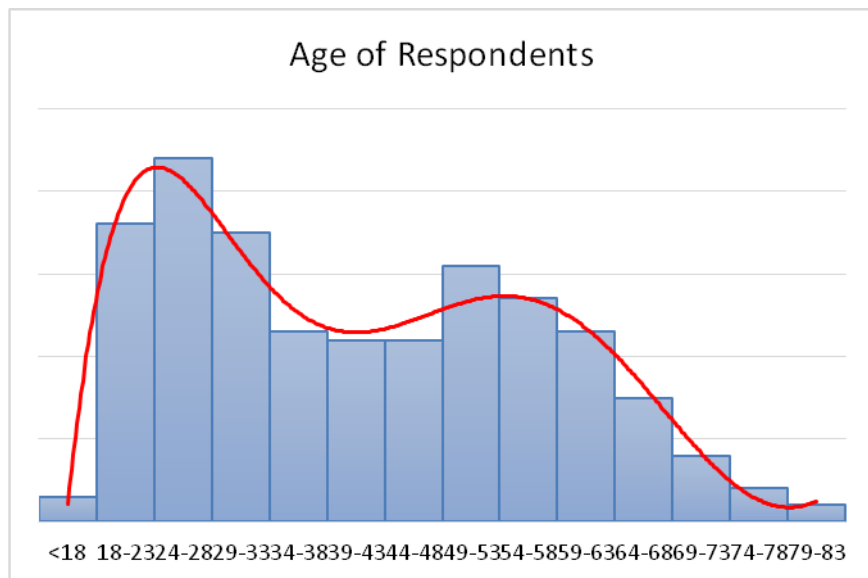
illustrate these results.

Demographics

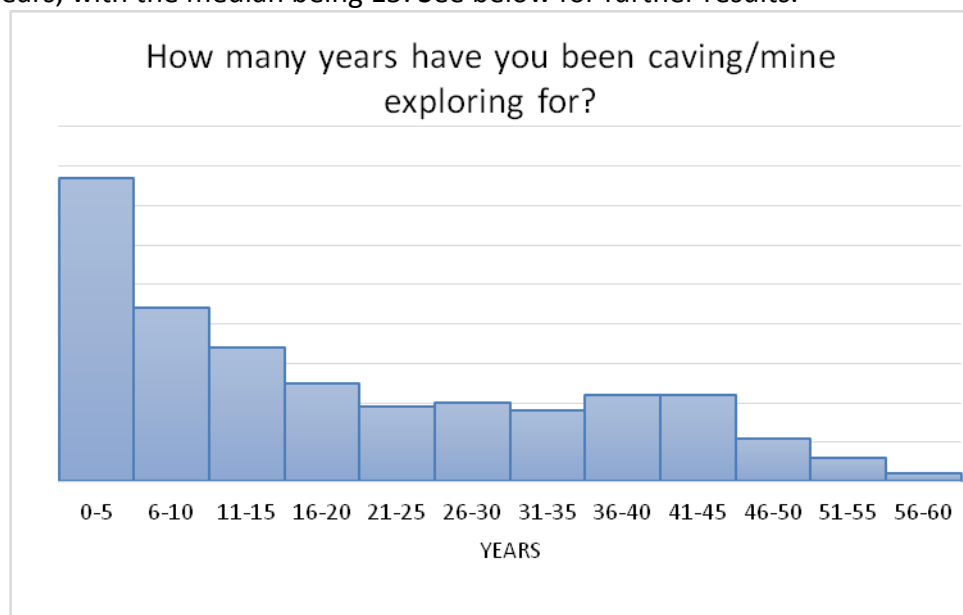
303 Respondents answered whether they are a BCA member with the vast majority (263) replying yes (see figure 1.1). If an estimate of the total population being around 6000 cavers is used, this would equate to 5% of the total.

With 302 respondents listing their gender, 67% identified as Male and 32% as Female, with <1% writing in their gender and 2 not wishing to disclose. 299 respondents filled out their age with the mean value being 41.5 years old. Polynomial distribution reveals 2 peaks, one at 24 and another (smaller peak) at 54.

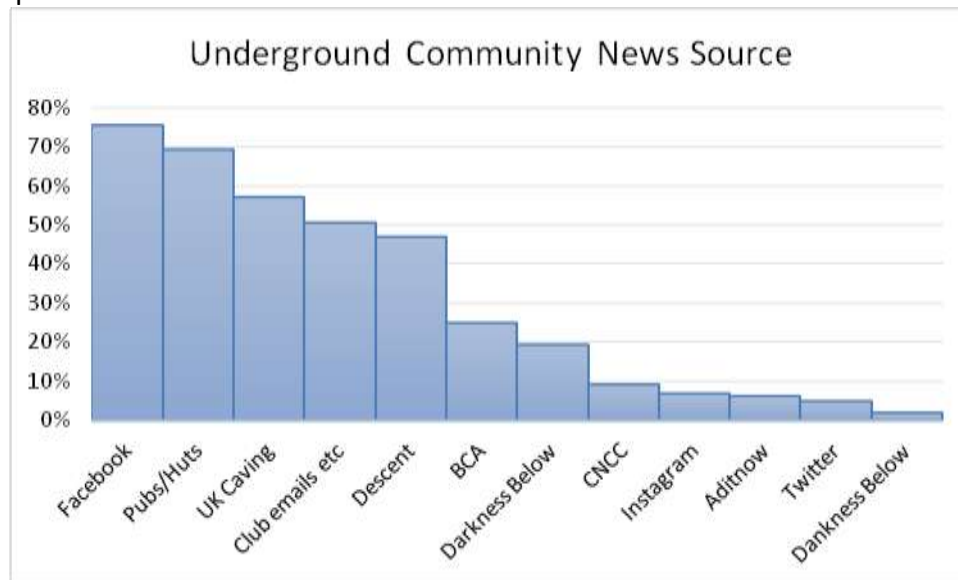
A population pyramid has also been included to



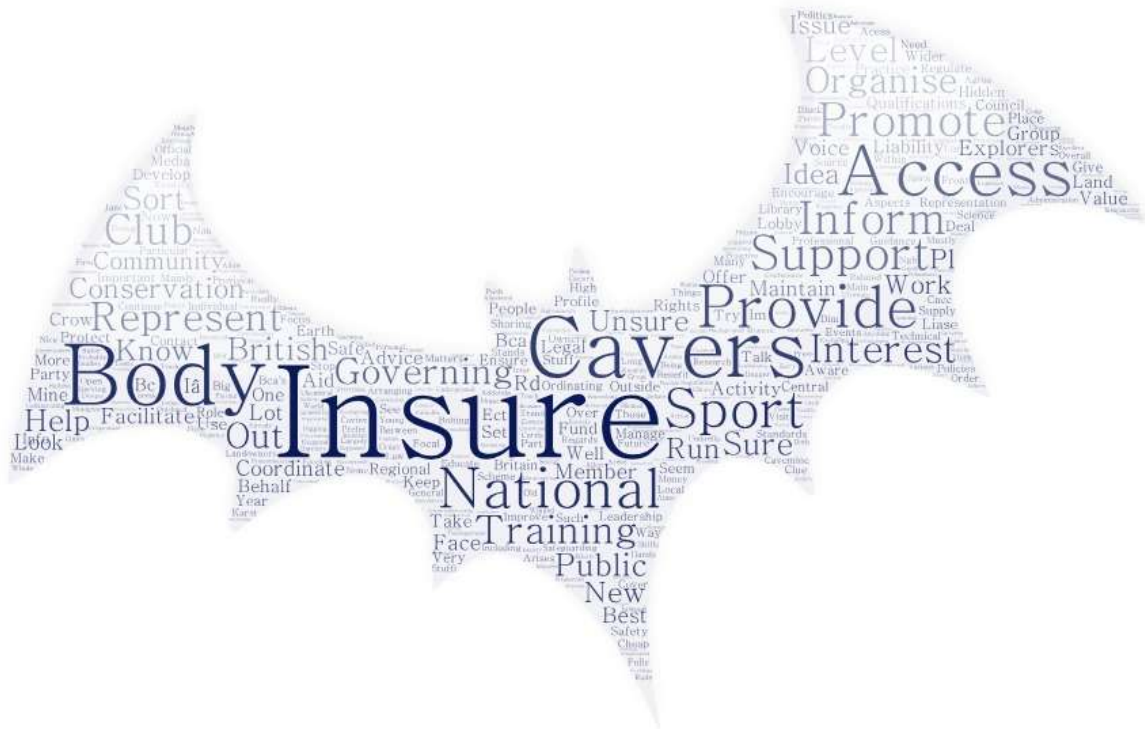
A further question 'How many years have you been caving/mine exploring for?' was also asked. 300 responses were received. 26% have been caving for 5 or fewer years. The mean average was 19.7 years, with the median being 15. See below for further results.



A further question 'How do you find out what's going on in the underground community?' was asked. Options included (in the following order): Descent, UK Caving, Darkness Below, The BCA Newsletter, A club, newsletter/email, Facebook, The BCA Website, Twitter, Instagram, Chatting in pubs/huts, Aditnow. Extra options were added as a write in, and Aditnow was only included as an option after 200 responses had already been received, although there were 11 write ins of the website. 10 responses that were generated in the space of 5 minutes solely referring to Dankness Below as their only news source were deleted. Despite this the spoof site still features in 2% of responses.



This was a free text answer. A word cloud was generated from the most frequently used terms after punctuation and common words (such as it, and, etc) were eliminated. Once a word was identified in a response it was counted, any further uses of that term in the response were ignored. There were 284 responses.



Provision of insurance (80 responses)

Don't know/Unsure (32 responses)

Support (22 responses)

The following examples are not scientifically selected, they are included to reflect the author's reading of the themes identified by word frequency:

‘Be a positive and proactive front for caving. Instead, it’s outdated and run by people with no clue who prefer their own personal agenda than improving.’

‘Unsure’

‘Providing power for cavers to collectively negotiate shared issues like land access, insurance, cave preservation and conservation, digging rights, and cave safety/rescue with each other and external stakeholders. Providing forum for equal dissemination of information about cave locations/surveys, access arrangements, cave science and history. Promoting communication between caving clubs and recruitment of younger cavers to the sport’

'Managing Training, Insurance, Handling Access Disputes, Promoting caving in Great Britain'

‘It is the sports governing body and champions/represents the cause of caving in the wider sense. It provides insurance cover and supports important popular national events such as Hidden Earth. BCA can help with funding and supports special interest groups. BCA is dependent upon hard working volunteers to function. It already does a great deal with relatively few physical resources and limited monies.’

‘Trying to justify it's existence.’

The same process was repeated for this question. There were 255 responses.



Access (76 responses)
Helping Clubs (34 responses)
Promotion (24 responses)
Younger (26 responses)
Training (20 responses)
Students (19 responses)

'Sort access so that it's only administered by 1 body per area! And much easier!'

‘Education and outreach, asking cavers what they need, working to preserve land when threatened and supporting landowner relations more centrally instead of leaving it to clubs and regions.’

'I think a better catalogue of caves, an interactive map with information, pictures and descriptions about caves would be great. Like <https://deandar.com/> but in English and for caves.'

'We need a clear Pro active stance encouraging participation and engagement of people from all ages and backgrounds. Pathways for under 18s to enter the sport need great improvement. Professional caving needs more oversight the lcmla scheme needs to be focused to ensure it is producing cave leaders that are invested in the sport and the number of trainers and assessed especially in the south west needs to be expanded. The BCA should be able to call local councils to account and provide a place of arbitration when a regional council is felt to not be representing its members.'

'Be more in the sense we all like caving and we all support the bca. I feel everyone knows the bca but really we don't know much about our governing body, and there more there mixed views...'

'Make them self more visible. Help/promote uni clubs. Support British expeditions abroad and exploration within the UK. As far as I'm concerned CHECC, ghar parau and ukcaving support cavers more than the BCA! Not to mention they are completely invisible in the North where majority of caves actually exist!'

'Not sure. Maybe support clubs somehow, organise training or legal advise. The clubs are key for getting into caving and social things. Whilst it is nice that all the club's are different, there must be some things that could be standardised or or supported in some way.'

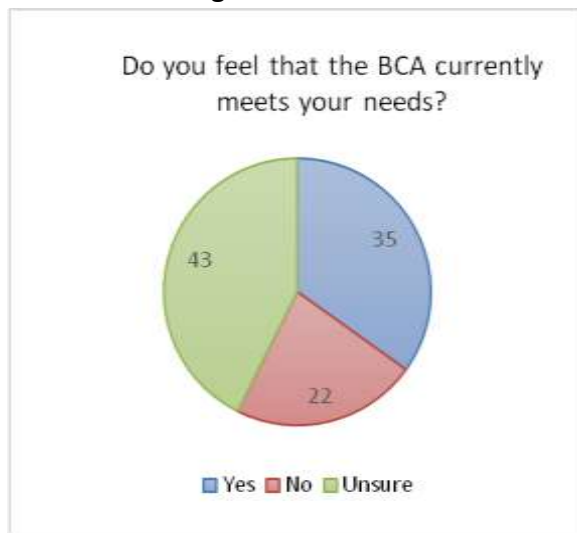
'my impression of caving as it was ~20yrs ago is that it was very diverse in terms of people's backgrounds. as it currently stands the 2 main ways to get into caving are to join a university club or to be lucky enough to be the child of a caver. this is problematic because it leaves out the demographic of people who don't go to university which is to the detriment of the sport. reaching out to people in their teens and 20s who don't go to university seems like a pretty good start.'

'Taking a more prominent stance and promoting "good news" stories about caving in the national press.'

What would make it more relevant to you?

The same process was again repeated for this question. There were 224 responses, including 15 that stated they had answered this in the previous question.

If they had some way of consulting/talking to the membership. Something along the lines of electronic voting.'



Meeting members needs

299 people responded to this question, with no clear majority in answer between Yes, No and Unsure. No other responses could be written in.

BCA's new vision?

The same process for the other 3 word clouds was repeated. There were 170 responses to this question.

Is there anything else that should be included in



Prominent themes identified:

Access (17 responses)

Community (16 responses)

Younger (12 responses)

Club (12 Responses)

Website (11 responses)

Examples include:

'I'd really like to hear where the BCA sees british caving in 30 years time, and how it sees it's own role developing. I'm not sure of anything in particular i'd like to see, other than some sort of strategy of how to modernise and popularise the outsiders view of caving.'

'Big push must be for younger members / access and increased IT integration. The original presentation of this questionnaire (hard copy to email etc) is a perfect example of how adrift bca is from modern communications.'

'Long past time BCA had a proper web site including online membership.'

'Actually communicating what it does. I assume it does a lot, but if I go from what I've actually seen directly from the BCA, it doesn't do anything. This lack of communication is key in understanding the lack of interest from so many cavers in the BCA.'

'inclusion? you do see some pretty sexist/homophobic behaviour in some caving huts unfortunately...'

‘To visit clubs and let us know what you do and what we can expect for our £18.’

‘Get us access to caves. Leaders are hard to locate and contact and generally too few or old to take you down.’

‘Greater involvement with mine exploration groups such as NAMHO and AditNow.’

Discussion

This survey showed a wide engagement with UK based cavers and mine explorers. There are significant limitations to the survey, primarily its online nature and the selection bias of engagement i.e. people who are either dissatisfied or involved with BCA being over represented. It would be wise to compare the demographics of those who answered the survey with the BCA’s membership database to see how representative it is.

That said, it has achieved a significant sample size and some very robust trends have emerged:

- The BCA should do more on access.
- BCA should be attracting new people to caving.
- Caving needs more young people.
- Caving should be promoted more.
- BCA membership is widely taken up for the primary reason of insurance.
- We do not communicate well with our members.
- Our website is outdated.
- On-line voting would help engagement.
- Clubs would like more support.

The BCA should do more on access. Access featured highly in all free text responses, being the highest referred to topic in two and second highest in the other two. Sentiment analysis is strongly recommended as there appears to be a large appetite for the BCA to intervene on access issues but it remains difficult to quantify in this analysis. Further exploration of this topic would be fruitful so as to determine attitudes towards Access Controlling Bodies and regional agreements. A current core value of the BCA’s constitution is that it cannot interfere with local access agreements, evidence would currently suggest that this should change.

Given the opaque nature of the BCA bureaucracy, i.e. the third most common response to what the BCA does was ‘don’t know/unsure’ and the commonest response to ‘Do you feel the BCA meets your needs?’ was unsure (43%) it would be advisable to obtain people’s opinions on the situation once it was explained to them.

BCA should be attracting new people to caving and **Caving needs more young people** are two intimately related topics. Youth was mentioned as the 4th most common topic in what we could be doing and 3rd most in what should be in the new vision. This was the focus of many of the comments regarding helping clubs although further analysis is needed to quantify this.

Caving should be promoted more. There was a large number of responses to all free text questions (approximately 10% in each category) regarding promotion or the manner in which it should be done. This was regarding caving in general and the BCA, the two were not separated out.

BCA membership is widely taken up for the primary reason of insurance. This is supported by the fact that 28.6% mention insurance in response to being asked what the BCA’s role is, the highest single response. This is unsurprising given many access agreements rely on BCA insurance. As stated above, many people don’t know what the BCA does other than insurance and several comments were made querying what the BCA does with its money. This leads to the next point:

We do not communicate well with our members. The fact that 21 people ended their responses with question marks when asked what BCA’s role is, is damning enough in itself.

Only 25% of people state that they get their news from the BCA in any form and the 5th most prominent topic for improvement mentioned use of social media. Strongly linked is the BCA's website:

Our website is outdated. This was the 4th most common suggested topic of improvement and was to a relative degree split over several questions due to vague questionnaire design. For example significant mention was made in response to 'What could the BCA be doing to help cavers?' with 11 responses mentioning the website. The quote '*A better website. They current BCA website is difficult to navigate and poorly developed.*' appears to be representative of responses although sentiment analysis would be fruitful in quantifying this.

On-line voting would help engagement. The 5th most common topic for improvement. A specific question to see if this would be popular with the wider membership would be advised given it has been consistently raised by a diverse set of sources (large timestamp intervals, both sexes, variety of ages).

Clubs would like more support. Helping clubs and the caving community feature heavily across all free text questions. More work is needed in analysing the data we have in order to draw out what exactly is being asked. A separate set of questions on this issue may yield more useful and specific suggestions. It is however clear

It should be mentioned that respondents recognize widely that training is delivered by BCA, and is significantly mentioned in something that could be improved. It was not included in the clear themes because a superficial reading of the comments revealed varying opinions, including a significant number from award holders. Given the situation QMC, the Training committee and the BCA have had over the last few years, it is unsurprising that this generated mixed views and high frequency of mention.

The CNCC were frequently touted as being an example to follow although all the reviews mentioning the CNCC came during a narrow period of approximately 48 hours. None appear to be duplicate and there are no other reasons to doubt the validity of the data.

Recommendations

- The themes listed in the discussion should be the initial basis of discussion the Vision and Constitutional Reform group.
- Further analysis of the data set is advised, sentiment analysis should prove useful in quantifying opinion.
- Further questions on specific topics should help clarify things.
- The BCA should implement changes and track its progress in identified areas immediately, many of these issues do not need to wait for constitutional reform. These include:
 - Planning a comprehensive media campaign to improve the image of caving to the general public.
 - Publicise the Youth and Development team's success with Swansea and Lancaster, making people aware what help is available from BCA. Also publicise things like making membership free for under 18s.
 - Put together a pack to help clubs advertise effectively and clarify the legality of taking under 18s underground.
 - Explain to cavers how the BCA works and what it does.
 - Revamp the website and put together a strategy for developing online voting. This would need a serious and genuine commitment.
 - Give press releases regarding BCA's involvement with access for the sake of transparency and dispel the myth of inaction and caving politics. An update on CRoW and the issues with Charterhouse Caving Company for example.

British Caving Association Vision Questionnaire

Thank you to those who have taken time to help the BCA with your insight towards a new vision. This is about to open.

Are you a BCA member?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

How many years have you been caving/mine exploring for?

What gender do you identify as?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

How old are you?

How do you find out what's going on in the underground community?

- ☐ Betsworth
- ☐ UK Caving
- ☐ Darkness Below
- ☐ The BCA Newsletter
- ☐ A club newsletter/mag
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ The BCA Website
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Chatting in pubs/clubs
- ☐ Advice
- ☐ BMCJ Newsletter
- ☐ Other

What is the BCA's role in British Caving?

What could it be doing to help cavers?

What would make it more relevant to you?

Do you feel that the BCA currently meets your needs?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Is there anything else that should be included in the BCA's new vision?

Item 17: Cave Registry Working Group Report – David Cooke

Nothing to report

Item 18: IT Working Group Report – *David Cooke*

Training Admin Software. The GoMembership software has been adopted. We are in the setup phase which requires significant IT input. A demo system has been setup for training and configuration purposes. We need to decide upon the best way to bend the software to BCA's particular requirements. There are on-going consultation meetings with GoMembership to help us through the process.

GDPR. 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.

Online Ballot. At the last Council meeting I spoke with Will. I committed to putting in place the necessary software to provide an in-house electronic voting system. Work on this has commenced. It is designed to work with the procedures in the current Constitution. I expect it will be able to accommodate any future changes to the Constitution. The process of identifying and implementing any changes to the Constitution remains Will's responsibility to lead.

Item 18.1 Web Services Report – *David Cooke*

Included in IT Working Group Report

Item 19: British Caving Library Report – *Jenny Potts*

Work on cataloguing surveys is now beginning to show results and we are at last making an impression on the mass of material from the John Beck legacy. As part of this we aim to enable DCA to put scans of Peak District cave surveys onto their Cave Registry website so that interested cavers are able to download them.

We have recently been made aware of a substantial amount of archive material from a family of 3 generations of cavers; this includes photographs, glass slides and other historical records as well as books and journals. We have been asked to assess which of this may be of interest to the Library and what options there might be in acquiring either the originals or scans of the material.

We are creating an archive of material relating to the Thai cave rescue, including published books, reports, newspaper articles, etc. as well as online information downloaded and turned into pdfs.

The Library now has its own copy of the complete series of the 2017 RGS Lectures, "The Golden Age of Caving", on a hard drive, thanks to Sid Perou.

The number of visitors continues to rise, reflecting the increase in use by researchers, volunteers and meetings. Our team of volunteers now includes a local girl doing Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bronze Level as well as club cavers, students and foreign cavers; all are contributing to the ongoing task of cataloguing the material which continues to pour into the Library.

We continue to try to increase the profile of the British Caving Library in every way we can, both to encourage donations of material and to encourage cavers to make use of the facility.

Item 20: UIS Representative's Report – *Andy Eavis*

Over the last few months, the main things within the UIS is work being done towards the International Congress in Lyon, France in 2021 and, also work towards “A Year of Caves and Karst”.

It has now been decided that the proposal is for two separate years of caves and karst, an internal one only within the caving community for 2021 coinciding with the International Congress.

Then, a second year of caves and karst involving UNESCO in its official capacity, and this would be 2025 corresponding with the next international congress after Lyon.

Much work is being done to try and establish these principles.

The next UIS international meeting will be the congress of the Asian group in the Philippines this September, over the period of 5th to 15th September.

If people look on the UIS website, they will find more information on the international congress as they unfold over the coming months.

Item 21: FSE Report - *Ged Campion*

Not much to report this time. Some information is repeated from January's report.

FSE Membership

The FSE comprised a membership of 31 countries. Georgia & Armenia have recently joined. Last year Turkey withdrew due to political turmoil. and Albania dropped out due to non- payment.

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 is published on a regular basis thanks to the hard work of Michael Laummans. The March edition is attached. The FSE has also published a Privacy Policy which was adopted unanimously by the GAM.

Last 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.

French National Congress

The French national Federation (FFS) will be holding their national congress in La Ciotat, Southern France, this year from 8th -10th June. The FSE has felt it necessary to try and engage with the FFS more robustly to get a representative from France to join the bureau given that

they are the largest community of cavers in Europe. Henk Goutier will attend on behalf of the FSE and his spoken French is very good.

Role of FSE Vice delegate to the BCA.

I have recently had discussions with Nick Williams (FSE vice delegate to the BCA) and following his resignation from the BCA council he feels this might be the appropriate time for another vice delegate to be elected from the council or the wider caving community if that were appropriate. I have always managed to attend all the 'foreign' meetings, so Nick never had to step in. The agreement was he would attend the council meetings and represent any FSE issues as vice delegate at that forum leaving me to travel abroad. Could council give this some consideration? The post could be put for election at the AGM in June.

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). Sacid-Korda's from Barcelona are now the FSE's 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, 26-29th September. Details can be found in FSE newsletter attached. (Unfortunately, this will clash with Hidden Earth. I've spoken to both parties, but neither will budge)!

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

ES Forum 2021 will take place at the UIS Congress in Lyon, France. This will celebrate 'The international year of the cave.'

Item 22: Cambrian Caving Council – *Stuart France*

1) after saying last September that "progress was glacial" and moving the senior civil servant leading the Welsh Government's land access for leisure reforms to other duties, they've now decided to go ahead after all with a different Sir Humphrey sat at the controls. No doubt Brexit has put the fear of God into them, and they want to Make Wales Great Again - for doing outdoors activities at least.

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-government-response-taking-forward-wales-sustainable-management-natural-resources>

These reforms, if they ever happen, will enable people like swimmers, equestrians, cyclists, hang-gliders to use CROW Access Land. These sports are explicitly excluded by CROW Act Schedule 2 but caving of course is not on that banned list. I have made the minister, who attended last week's National Access Forum meeting, aware of NRW/Defra's semantic objections to us, so Cambrian have been invited to write to her setting out our vision on how caving could be accommodated. It is the best open door I've seen outside of Scotland.

2) Internet security. The problem that copies of at least one Cambrian email were sent by the BCA server to unauthorised recipients has not been explained or resolved. Our executive has

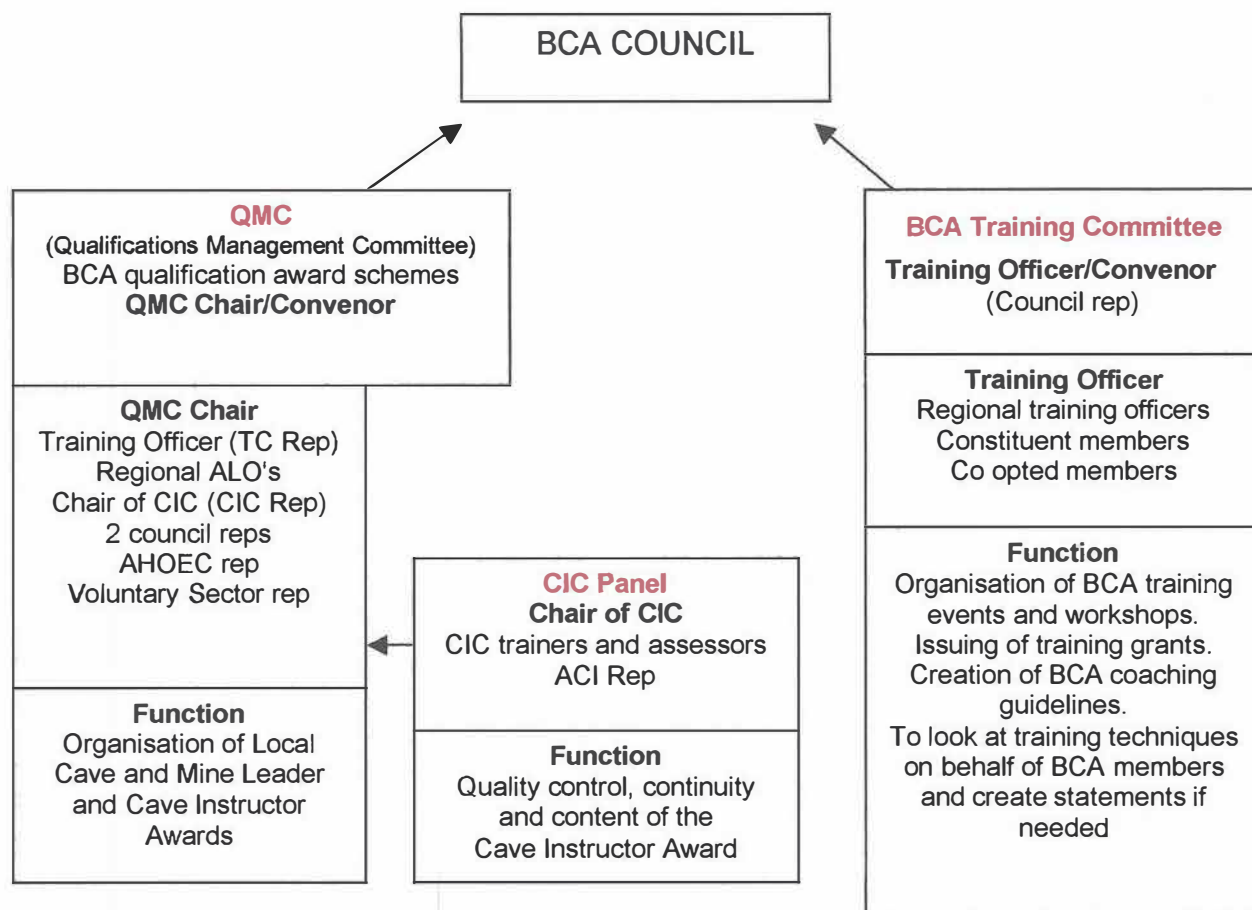
decided we need to migrate away from BCA to a professionally run ISP. This begs the question of who owns the domain cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk and paying the ongoing re-registration fees. I'm assuming it is the BCA. The BCA have not replied to my email about transferring the ownership of Cambrian's domain to Cambrian itself prior to us migrating to another provider. I'd like answers please at Saturday's council meeting followed by cooperation from BCA.

Other Matters & Reports

Item 24: Online Voting for BCA members – *Will Burn*

The report is the same as before. It would require significant work from the webmaster who hasn't committed to this. We have not communicated about it since the last council meeting.

APPENDIX 4



For report 10th April 2019