



Council Meeting 11th January 2020 Reports

Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall, DY104QA
Saturday 11th January 2020, 10:30am

Reports presented in order that they appear in the agenda

Chair (Les Williams)

As BCA Chair, I will leave it to the various Council members and appointees to report on their areas; my role outside of meetings has been limited to general BCA admin and discussions; nothing exciting enough to write about here. Needless to say, a lot has happened over the past three months, so please do read the reports carefully. My focus as always will be to ensure a productive meeting, despite the packed agenda. You can help me ensure the meeting is productive by reading all the documents in advance and coming prepared to discuss the items on the agenda.”

Secretary (Matt Ewles)

I am delighted by the results of the national ballot, which were circulated to you all by email. It was a very strong signal of support for the proposed reforms, and hopefully by the time of this meeting the constitution will have been updated on the website (waiting on me). The Manual of Operations proposal document to be discussed at this meeting has also been updated accordingly.

Incidentally, as well as the ballot organisers, I'd like to note a specific thanks to Katie Eavis and Ari Cooper-Davis for their role in the ballot. They both remained on-hand throughout the one-month period and dealt with all enquiries quickly, efficiently and professionally.

I am delighted to see that we have an applicant for the C&A Officer role, and I'd like everyone to welcome Claire back to her second BCA meeting. She has my full support in taking on the role, and from the four months that we've been in correspondence, I am left in no doubt that she will be excellent for the BCA. As Claire is a non-caver, the guidance of the C&A Committee will be needed but will hopefully be easy to deliver thanks to having a strong and well organised Chairperson.

In early November, the funding proposals presented in the agenda from Rostam came to light. At the time, following some discussion in BCA Executive, it was decided that this really needed to go to BCA Council. Given the assigned end-of-year deadlines for our contribution to the match-funding, I wrote a letter to Stories in Stone to explain the situation, and that the BCA need to discuss this and cannot do so until 11th January. This seems to have been accepted and the deadline delayed, and I am very pleased to see this on the agenda for Council consideration. Please review this carefully.

Other than this, my workload has averaged 6-8 hours per week, mostly taken up with finalising minutes from the previous meeting, dealing with resulting action items, liaising with BCA Executive on housekeeping matters, working with a few fellow Officers to provide advice/guidance, replying to (many) emails, preparing documents for this meeting, and of course the ballot, where I prepared all the necessary text and helped Katie/Ari in dealing with enquiries. Plenty to keep me busy!

It is extremely disappointing that I have had to raise the ongoing IT impasse as an agenda item again. I really did not want things to get to this position, but I cannot accept that a Council appointee can be allowed to unilaterally disregard Council instruction and withhold access to BCA systems.

You all know that I stood for BCA Secretary because I wanted to help work towards refreshing the Association, making it into a sleek and sustainable organisation for the future and to inspire cavers to support us. The roadblocks that just one person is creating are intolerable. I would like for Council to provide definitive endorsement to a resolution that allows myself, Gary, and David, to know where we stand and how we should move forward. If Council wish to support the status quo, or simply to avoid rocking the boat, then I will accept this with no hard feelings against anyone who supports this. At least I will know to back off and focus my efforts elsewhere.

Treasurer (Howard Jones)

Current bank balances:

As at 10/12/19 was £298,500. Of which £252,500 is in medium-term interest-bearing accounts and £25,000 is in a short term deposit account. I expect this to reduce by £10k at year end.

Low claim liability insurance rebates:

Hence all have now been received. Total value £7,000. There is likely to be one for 2019 that would be received in late 2020.

Budget adherence:

To date I have no knowledge of any item of expenditure that is going to be materially over budget.

Regional accounts:

CSCC submitted their claim of some £3,600 and accounts for 2018 for review by the other members of Fin Com. Their accounts are being scrutinised and if accepted will be paid before year end. DCA submitted their claim of some £2,800 and accounts for 2018 for review by the other members of Fin Com. Their accounts are being scrutinised and if accepted will be paid before year end.

Devon region has not submitted a claim yet for 2018, despite AGMs having been held and accounts passed.

Tax return 2018:

Further to the AGM accepting the 2018 accounts I prepared and submitted our tax return for 2018. No tax is due. No response from HMRC to date and none expected.

Investment of cash surplus:

BCA accepted my proposal in April to invest some of our funds in slightly riskier assets to get a larger return. To date I have scrutinised a number of options but none fitted our criteria. Brexit may change this if it ever happens. **Ongoing.**

Donations:

Have paid GPF £6,000 for their entire 2019 donation and BCRA £12,000 being the library donation for 2019.

Library support:

At last Council it was agreed to provide further admin support to BCRA for the National Caving Library. Katie Eavis has agreed to increase her hours and take on this extra work, early signs are encouraging. The cost of these extra hours will be borne by BCA and not recharged to BCRA. Library support for 2020 will therefore be £12,000 in cash as before plus this extra admin cost, a total of some £18k.

Budget 2020:

It is notable that since 2004 BCA has had a surplus of income over expenditure each year and reserves have grown from £60k to over £250k. Budget for 2020 was accepted at last Council (and included in the October minutes) showing a deficit.

Howard Jones, 10th December 2019

Membership Administrator (Wendy Williams)

2019

CIMs = 5584
Groups = 177
DIMs = 809

2020

DIMs 2020 = 111

These are the membership figures correct as of 15.12.19

We have 4 new clubs who are interested in joining BCA:

1. Lancashire Caving & Climbing Club
2. Warminster Adventure Sports Club
3. North Wales Mine / Cave Explorers
4. Liverpool University Potholing Club (lapsed members)

I am in communication with all 4 Clubs and until the results of the ballot are known I am not sure which membership option they will take.

I will present all new clubs to Council at the meeting with a printout of their 100-word statements.

Insurance Manager (Howard Jones)

Liability Renewal:

Meeting to be held 17/12/19 to confirm renewal with Hiscox for first £2m and AIG for subsequent £3m). Terms are likely to be as follows:

2019 premium including tax: £38,300
2020 premium including tax: £39,600
% increase 3.4%

Reasons for increase: Increase in member numbers declared and also AIG (who insure above £2m) have a 7-figure claim on another outdoor policy and so want a 9% increase on their premium. The market was approached for alternatives but none were found that were competitive.

Note the above values include the BCA minor insurance policies at £1,200 plus tax; the total insurance premiums have remained static over the last 2 years due to various actions taken by BCA.

Low claim rebates:

All past low claims rebates have been received. Likely to be one for 2019, which will be received late 2020.

Instructor insurance: (not a BCA issue):

This is under discussion between Juliet and me, no progress since last meeting of Council.

Minera quarry access:

Landlord requested £10m liability cover plus an endorsement to the BCA policy. We countered with our existing cover which has been accepted. We expect access to be open again shortly after some remedial work to be carried out by the local club. Dewi Lloyd and I met with the landowner's agent on site and had a fruitful discussion about opening up access in the surrounding area as well, which would allow access to several entrances that are currently out of bounds.

Expedition policy:

Following approval by Council in April 2019 this has been launched on 1st June. This has put extra demand on the BCA Insurance manager's role. Feedback from the underwriters is as follows:

I detail below the updated figures as at the 10th of December.

Number of Quotes	208	(121 Single Trip, 79 AMT 45 days, 4 AMT 60 days & 4 AMT 90 days)
Number of Sales	66	(47 Single Trip & 19 AMT 45 days)
Percentage take-up	32%	

Howard Jones, 13th December 2019

Conservation and Access Officer

Position vacant; no report.

CRoW Working Party (David Rose)

Confirmed that nothing to report.

Publications and Information Officer (Jane Allen)

Secretary note; See supplementary agenda items (originally submitted as part of report) for Council discussion; might wish to deal with this agenda item in parallel with reviewing this report.

www.bcacavingcover.com

Spare cards (produced by the insurers for Hidden Earth) are now on display at various locations, for example Inglesport. If you would like some please let me know.

I intend to ask Council for their thoughts on what promotion of the website they would like going forward i.e. a budget. Disappointing that despite promises and a lot of talk nothing has been forthcoming from David Jeffrey (Marketing) at PJ Hayman.

THE PROMOTION OF BCA

Descent

We need an advertising strategy for Descent. Issue 270 should have advertised the ballot but didn't, we realised too late, my fault however I am struggling for time at the moment. The decision to place the above advert was made whilst I was away on holiday and I missed the obvious mistake – can you see what it is? Interestingly, no one has pointed it out to me apart from Matt.



As I keep saying, these adverts are costing BCA a lot of money and the vast majority of cavers are not aware of the support, to the tune of £1000's we are giving Descent. I have added the topic to the agenda for discussion as I'm not getting clarity when it's discussed as part of my report at Council meetings.

Ghar Parau

I also believe we should make far more of the money BCA give to Ghar Parau for expeditions. It's ironic that GP have such a positive image amongst cavers whereas BCA has some work to do – yet it's mainly BCA money that is handed out by GP each year. **Should BCA not be proud about this too??**

FACEBOOK

- The number of 'likes' is now over 1,233 (up from 1147) and rising. I intend to promote the BCA Facebook page itself to increase the number of likes as it's a great way to reach many cavers cost effectively.
- Repeated again - If other BCA groups 'tag' BCA in their Facebook posts, I will see them and know to share. It's too time consuming looking at lots of groups every day. Use @BritishCavingAssociation also use @ukcaving and I will share on there too. **No one does!**
- BCRA are active on Facebook but the two organisations aren't working together – is this an issue? Have added to Agenda for discussion as I'd like guidance

The BCA Newsletter

I intend to conduct a social media campaign when the next newsletter is published at the end of the year to a) promote the latest edition and b) encourage people to sign up to receive it.

BCA Publications, Advice Notices and Information

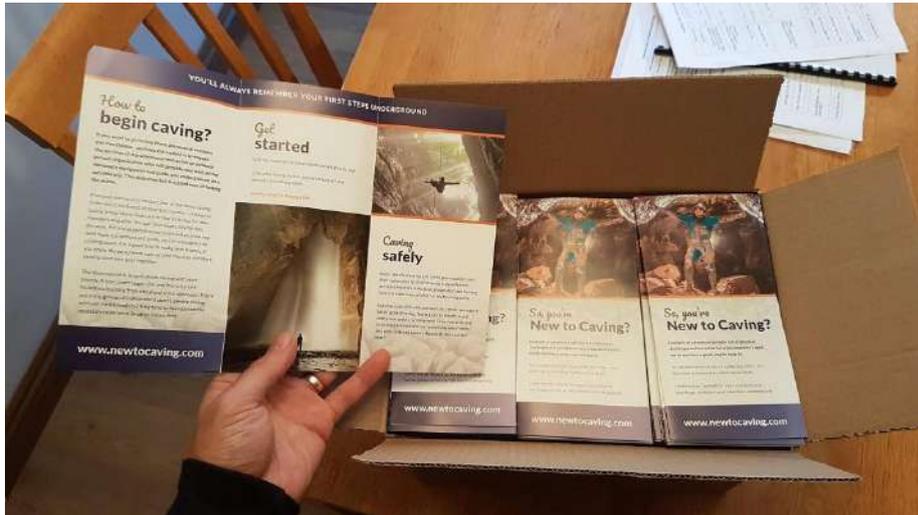
Some of the notices listed on the current BCA website are outdated – no doubt this will be addressed during the new website design. If my help is required, please do let me know.

THE PROMOTION OF CAVING

New to Caving leaflets

We will soon need another print run of New To Caving leaflets and some more Perspex purchased. If you would like some, please let me know!

I will run another 'leaflets available' campaign in the New Year for both NTC & Minimal Impacts Guidelines.



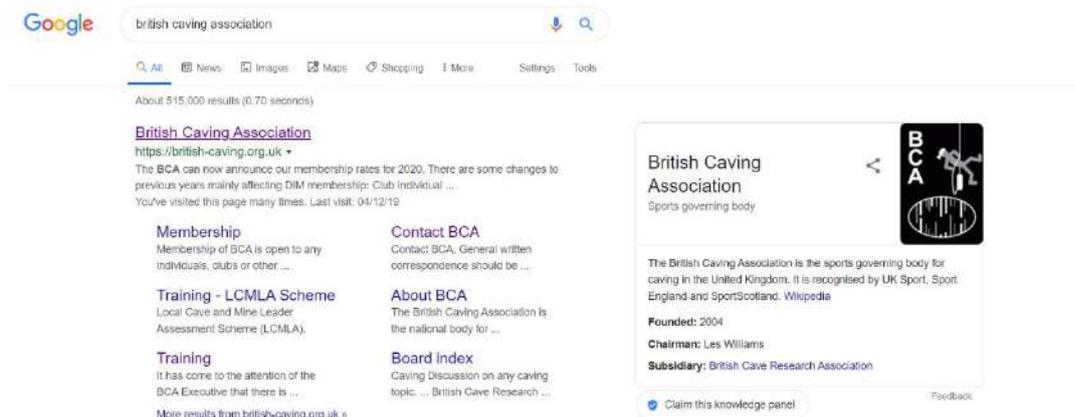
I'm planning various posts on the BCA Facebook page & on UKC to keep cavers informed on various aspects of our work – the excellent information sheets various folks sent me – Y&D, C&A, E&T, Vision etc will be used.

If you have any information you would like to share about BCA and its work, please let me know. If I have it, I can share it, thank you.

The BCA Logo

I'm hoping to have more time in the New Year and plan to run a 'Logo Police' campaign – as many clubs, groups, etc still display the old BCA logo. In case you didn't spot it, the old logo was used in the Descent BCA advert above– we really do need to get the old one updated for the new one as soon as possible 😊

Google BCA and this appears!



A BCA fund for UK based caving events?

One aspect of our sport cavers enjoy is meeting up for caving and/or social events.

BCA already fund expedition caving which I totally agree with, however many cavers are not able to go on expedition for a variety of reasons, they are however able to join in with UK based social events. Why not help support some of these?

BCA's support of CHECC could have been better organised this year and I have been approached by Cavefest for support for their Mendip event in 2020. Many other smaller events are held throughout the year, it would be excellent, positive promotion for BCA to be seen to support these in some way.

Newsletter Editor (David Rose)

Confirmed that nothing to report.

British Caving Library (Jenny Potts)

Library Assistant Appointment

Thanks to the agreement of the October BCA Council to increase the funding for BCL we have been able to appoint a Library Assistant, Katie Eavis, who started work for us on 6th November. Katie is a keen caver (Secretary of Eldon P.C.) who lives locally and, with 3 young children, is interested in flexible working. She works 10 hours a week, partly in the Library and partly from home, taking a box of publications away with her to work on each week. She has already begun to make a real difference in tackling the backlog of cataloguing left over from the days of the BCRA Library.

Cataloguing Surveys

Our two volunteers have made huge inroads on the hundreds of Peak District surveys in the John Beck Legacy. 98 of the 133 tubes have now been dealt with and we have already been able to supply DCA with a spreadsheet detailing the 316 surveys and maps identified so far. There are many other surveys in our collection remaining to be catalogued but we have made the John Beck surveys a priority in order for DCA to be able include the most up-to-date survey scans on their website.

Archive Materials donated

The collection from the family of 3 generations of cavers is being worked through and, since the family wish to keep some of the items themselves for the time being, a large number of photos have been scanned. We are now working through these with a view to putting some online as part of the BCRA Archives section of the BCL website.

We have recently been donated a photo album of exploits in Yorkshire caves created by a caving couple in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The photo album and an associated press cutting about the couple's rescue from a flooded Alum Pot in September 1948 have already been put online in the BCRA Archives. We now have several cavers interested in helping to work out which caving club this couple were associated with. Clearly the "history of caving" in the UK is now a subject of real interest to a growing number of cavers.

Visitors, Enquiries, etc.

In early November the Library hosted the Cave Survey Group's Training session for the second year running - this time they took over the Library facilities for 3 days and 13 members of the group packed round the tables to swap information on modern surveying methods.

In December we hosted a group of 4 cavers from TSG researching issues to do with Peak Cavern and associated mine and cave systems. They stayed for a whole day and made extensive use of our facilities in copying and scanning items.

Many other visitors have either visited to do their own research or have emailed us to either do research for them or simply to request a scan of an item we hold. This side of the work increases all the time as cavers become aware of what we can provide.

By 3rd. December 2019 the Library had played host to 90 visitors, compared to the 96 in the whole of 2018 - and that's not at the end of the year yet. So the usage continues to rise from the less than 30 who made use of the British Caving Library in 2010 - this is compared to the single figure usage of the last year of the "BCRA Library" in 2007. We don't charge BCA members for use of the facilities but many of our visitors make donations - £124.00 so far this year. Plus, of course the £368+ received in donations for our Lucky Dip stand at Hidden Earth where we passed on duplicate publications to other cavers.

In addition to the Hidden Earth Lucky Dip, we also pass on runs of duplicate periodicals to help to complete collections held by clubs around the country. We want to encourage caving Libraries in general and ensure that they communicate with us and with each other - all cavers will benefit from this.

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.

Supplementary note from Mary Wilde:

I just want to thank Craig Pattison who has an office in the same building, for a donation of excellent chairs and some computer equipment to the library.

Media Liaison (Andy Eavis)

Again, a quiet period for Media Liaison.

There has been an enquiry from BBC Television and Steve Backshall for a caving trip to Seram in Indonesia. I put this query onto cavers in Indonesia who have been working in Seram which has the deepest cave in Indonesia. They are in discussion.

I had an enquiry from the Westminster Speleological Group enquiring whether they could use the BCA logo, and this was passed on to Matt Ewles who sorted it out in a timely manner.

Another enquiry from BBC reference a large cave like Deer Cave. This enquiry was passed on to Roo Walters who gave them a fly through, and I left him to communicate with them directly.

In the last few days an invitation was received from the Daily Telegraph to help on the Elon Musk/Vernon Unsworth court case. I declined the invitation and didn't pass it on!!

Andy Eavis, 10th December 2019

Cave Registry (David Cooke)

No report submitted.

Webmaster (Gary Douthwaite)

Ballot Website

Apart from a handful of user problems, the ballot website seemed to work well. I worked closely with Katie, Matt and Ari to correct any issues swiftly and it came to a successful close on 13th December. I will keep the site running with the data intact for the next month or so and following that the data will be securely archived.

The ballot website is only a temporary measure pending the longer-term goal of incorporating online voting into a 'members area' on the website. I will present further information on this once things progress.

New Website

Work has been on-going on the new website however progress has been slowed by working on the ballot voting website. I am hopeful that a beta version will be available by the time of the January meeting or if not, shortly after. The new site will go out for testing and comments by the ITWG as well as BCA Council prior to being made public.

Once any obvious issues have been corrected it will be made available publicly via a 'try the new website' switch on the current website to get further comments.

If everything goes to plan, I would expect the public side of the new site (that's the current site but excluding BCA Online) to be fully implemented in the first quarter of 2020. The current site will then be archived.

Council members who require it will be given access to update relevant areas of the site and I will be on hand to offer help and training if needed. I'm happy to go through things in person if that helps.

Website Content

I would like to once again remind everyone on Council to please check the current website for up to date content. This includes any areas but particularly those that your role is responsible for. You are able to update it yourself however if you don't know how or don't have time, please just email any changes to me at webmaster@british-caving.org.uk and I will take care of it.

Web Services (David Cooke)

No report submitted.

IT Working Party (David Cooke)

No report submitted.

Training Officer (Nigel Atkins)

No report submitted.

Qualifications Management Committee (Juliet Parker-Smith)

A short report this time, as QMC haven't met since September, thus most business was included in my last report.

- It was agreed at the last Council meeting, that QMC pursue the idea of dedicating the grant which BCA currently offer to those working within the voluntary sector who wish to pursue a BCA Leadership or Instructing award, to the memory of Nigel Ball and Dave Elliot, in recognition of their outstanding commitment to the caving world and to the development and success of the BCA award schemes. I have written to Gill and Pauline, their respective widows, to ensure that they are comfortable with this suggestion, and await replies before progressing with this idea.
- Go Membership
Slow progress continues with the implementation of this Data Management System – a lengthy process of transferring information from the three data bases currently in existence.
- Stats:
An overview of participation in BCA schemes, shows a healthy uptake.

2019 LCMLA/CIC Statistics up to 16/12/2019	
Category	Number
LCMLA Registrations	115
LCMLA Training Courses Run	106
LCMLA Assessments Run	153
LCMLA Initial Certificates Issued	82
LCMLA Update Workshops Run	18
LCMLA Certificate Updates Issued	72
CIC Registrations	13
CIC Training Courses Run	4
CIC Assessments Run	9
CIC Initial Certificates Issued	2
CIC Update Workshops Run	3
CIC Certificates Updates Issued	15

- Radon:

Many Trainer/Assessors have been proactive in voluntarily working under the guidance of the Radon Working Group, to conduct a further 3 rounds of sampling, as we attempt to build an understanding of the annual levels of radon in all regions. The final round of sampling will take place in April.

The impact of the updated Ionising Radiation Regulations (IRR17) is currently unclear for those working professionally underground, and so in partnership with the Radon Working Group, we are looking to produce guidance for those working professionally. This would include an understanding of the responsibilities of an instructor, employer or contractor. To ensure that this guidance is compliant, QMC are looking to engage the services of a Radon Protection Adviser (RPA), as this is not an area where we have the necessary expertise 'in-house'. Discussions have taken place with HSE, various RPAs, as well as those that advise the MoD in respect of these risk assessments.

- Resources:

- Documented information on 'suggested belay devices/systems for the level 2 award' has been disseminated to all LCMLA trainer/assessors, with a brief to cascade this information out to award holders through up-date workshops. Feed-back on this valuable piece of work has been positive.
- The document currently being written to support the 'level 2' rope-work resource has been shared with T/A's for comment and it is hoped that this will be ready to add to the website 'resource section' in the near future.
- Water safety notes have been prepared for use at both LCMLA and CIC level, to expand on the detail which the current syllabuses and handbooks include.

Equipment and Techniques Officer (Mark Sims)

No report submitted.

Rope Testing (Bob Mehew)

NCA helped fund the cost of a rope test rig at the Bradford Pothole Club's garage back in the early 2000's. The rig is instrumented and has been used on a number of occasions to provide evidence in response to questions over rope, knots and gear. This includes work such as the use of pulley jammer combinations reported in mid 2019, Y hang knots (including the Bowline of the Bight potential failure mode), cows tails, usage of rope and most recently on soft shackles (using dyneema cord to replace maillons and crabs on SRT pitches at substantial cost and weight reductions) which is still in progress. Indeed a question has just been asked by Training Committee over the benefits of Alpine v Caver's Butterfly knots which awaits investigation. The rig offers a unique facility to measure both the force on and extension of the rope thus allowing energy consumed to be computed. Alongside the dynamic Rope Test Rig, the BCA has funded a tensile rig which allows similar work to be conducted in comparative slow motion.

The Bradford are now planning to replace their existing garage with a new one. Whilst the BCA's tensile rig is movable, there is serious question as to whether the steel work of the Rope Test Rig can be moved, given it is cast into some strong foundations! (The instrumentation is moveable.) I am

therefore seeking Council's agreement in principle to funding replacement steel work if it is needed. An estimate of the steel's cost is around £700 but no doubt there will be some incidental costs as well. The time frame for the expenditure is unclear as discussions on planning permission continue.

Youth and Development Officer (Rostam Namaghi)

Secretary note: See proposal to fund the Adventure Academy, which accompanies this report.

Ongoing discussions with CHECC regarding a University Club and its Student Guild

Josh White on behalf of BCA Y&D, together with David Botcherby (CHECC, BCA Y&D) have been leading further discussion with a student club and their guild regarding their future. They travelled to a sit down meeting with representatives of the party to discuss a myriad of issues among which were:

- The requirement of public liability insurance of up to £10 million for club events (this was raised specifically in regard to training rather than caving)
- The fact that LCMLAs and CICs are not needed to take students caving and are inappropriate qualifications to do so
- A way forward in getting the club back into caving regularly

The British Caving Library was helpful in very promptly providing comprehensive information regarding the club's history, and we would like to thank them for this. This process is on-going and does require significant manpower in keeping the discussions going.

Youth Caving Teams

We are in the process of setting up a comprehensive pack for clubs and as part of this want to start a national youth caving team. The principle would be to have a store of kit in each region, volunteers that have had their DBS check and relevant qualifications (if necessary) signed up to do one weekend every 3 months. This would produce a 12 weekends a year and establish an amateur youth caving set up. A budget proposal has not been included as it would be initially set up through the kit lend scheme. We are exploring external funding options too. The bulk of this work is (and always will be) finding the volunteers and bringing people together. This, together with the caving pack will be Y&D's main focus in 2020.

Vision Working Party (Hellie Adams)

Hi all I am sorry to say we done nothing since the last council meeting which is entirely my fault! I was stuck down with tonsillitis and then a chest infection by the time I was better it the end of November so missing a meeting window. And then we just got back from holiday. Although I do hope to have 5 mission statements to present by the 11th of January they are not done in time for the deadline.

Safeguarding (Chris Boardman)

Not much new to report. Since the last meeting I've offered to arrange DBS checks for any instructors with BCA qualifications who want one of their own, at their cost. I also attended an interesting seminar about sexting.

Radon Working Party (Gethin Thomas)

The Radon Working Group has been very pro-active since the last BCA meeting when funding was approved to conduct a further 3 rounds of sampling. The sampling is necessary to build up an understanding of the annual levels of radon as per the revised Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017.

Sampling continued throughout November, with caves and mines sampled across the UK, focussing on the sites sampled during the Summer that exceeded 300bqm-3. Thanks have to be passed on to those giving up their time to place and recover dose meters, and particularly those co-ordinating the sampling in each region; Graham Derbyshire in Northern England, Pete Knight in Derbyshire, Stephan Natynczuk in Southern England, and Richard Hill in South Wales.

We are awaiting the results from this round of sampling and preparing the next round for the end of January. The final round of sampling will then take place in April.

Bob Mehew is making inroads in updating the Radon Underground document to reflect the changes in regulations that have taken place since the last revision in 2012. The data gathered from the rounds of sampling will be invaluable to the update.

It is evident that the greatest impact of the updated Ionising Radiation Regulations (IRR17) will be for those working professionally underground. With QMC we are looking to produce guidance for those working professionally on how to conduct reliable sampling of caves/mines together with broad risk assessments on managing instructor's exposure to radon in light of the new regulations. This would include an understanding of the responsibilities of an instructor, employer or contractor. To ensure this guidance is compliant QMC are looking to engage the services of a Radon Protection Adviser (RPA). Discussions have taken place with HSE, various RPAs, as well as those that advise the MoD in respect of these risk assessments.

Finally, there were concerns that the International Commission of Radiological Protections recommendation (in their paper ICRP137) for a change in the dose conversion factor used to calculate an individual's dose based on how they work underground would take effect in January 2020. The proposal would see a 4 to 5 fold increase in an individuals calculated dose for those instructing underground, which would likely push many instructors dose (measured in Millisieverts, mSv) above the action level of 6mSv. Those likely to be exposed to more than 6mSv in a work environment are known as "classified workers" and require a range of measures to be adopted to ensure an instructors dose is kept to a minimum. It's likely the expense of having to conform to the classified workers regulations would be too expensive for many to justify. Discussions are on-going at an international level with regards ICRP137, however no decision has been made and so the calculations, for the next 12 months at least, remain unchanged.

UIS Representative (Andy Eavis)

Not very much has been happening since the last council meeting. I met with George Veni the President in Phoenix, Arizona where we had a meeting discussing the national congress in Lyon in 2021 and the International Year of Caves and Karst. He is suggesting we have involvement with the International Year and I am planning on involving one or two other people in the BCA on this.

The next meeting of the UIS Bureau is in Slovakia on 9th and 10th May. There is a sinkhole conference in Porto Rico on 20th to 24th April which will have a UIS presence and I have a further meeting with the President of the UIS 20th – 23rd May.

The next UIS International Congress is in Lyon, France July 22nd – 30th 2021. There is a lot going on in Lyon in preparation for this.

As ever, the details of the international events can be found on the website: www.uis-speleo.org

FSE Representative (Ged Campion)

FSE Membership

The FSE currently comprises a membership of 31 countries.

Information & Publicity

The FSE Facebook page URL: <https://www.facebook.com/eurospeleo>. WikiCaves organisation keep the FSE website updated on a regular basis. The FSE newsletter is published on a regular basis. The November edition is attached.

Last General Assembly Meeting of the FSE(GAM) 2019

The GAM at the Eurospeleo Forum 2019 in Dolni Lozen, Bulgaria, 26-29th September. Full details of the meeting and decisions can be found in the GAM minutes on the FSE web site.

The main changes of personnel were: Vice-President Mladen Grasic and Vice-Secretary Michael Laumanns decided to step down from their positions and Michel Isnard (FR delegate) was voted in as new Vice-President and Joerg Dreybrodt (supported by the German federation) as new Vice-Secretary; both unanimously. The FSE Treasurer, Henk Goutier (NL) agreed to carry on for another 4year term in office. Jean-Claude Thies (Lux) agreed to continue for the next period (2019) as the FSE Treasury Auditor.

The work of the ECPC commission

The FSE, through the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) is now a member of the Board of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) in Brussels and thus directly involved in the EEB decision making working with EU commissioners and the different directorates within the EU. The ECPC has direct input into two working groups, 'Bio-diversity' and 'Water'. FSE will be actively supporting the International year of Caves & Karst 2021 an initiative led by the UIS.

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 official 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. Please see attached ESP projects report. The next FSE General assembly meeting will be held in 2020 in Burgos, northern Spain, August.

Timetable of Eurospeleo events & General Assembly Meetings over next 3 years that involve the FSE: ES Forum 2021 will take place at the UIS Congress in Lyon, France. This will celebrate 'The international year of the cave.'