



## Draft Minutes of the August 2020 Council Meeting

Held by Zoom

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020, 7:30 pm

**Note** Recording of the meeting took place on Zoom

**Chair:** P Rowsell

**Secretary:** Russell Myers

**Treasurer:** Howard Jones

**Recorder:** Russell Myers

Meeting documentation

The Agenda was circulated by email to Council members on 9<sup>th</sup> August.

Three reports were circulated from the Secretary via the Council-list on 17<sup>th</sup> August and are embodied in the text of these minutes.

All documents have been posted on the BCA web site after the meeting.

## Council Positions, Attendance and Report Status Table

### Voting Positions

Position	Name & Initials		Atn (y/n)	Report Status	
				Last	New
<b>BCA Executive</b>					
Chairman (Acting) (2018- 2021) 3 years	Phil Rowsell	PJR	Y		
Secretary (Acting) (2019- 2022) 3 years	Russell Myers	RM	Y		
Treasurer (2017- 2020 - 3 years)	Howard Jones	HJJ	Y	26/07/2020	Yes
<b>Group/Club Representatives</b>					
Position 1 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Hellie Adams	HA	Y		
Position 2 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Josh White	JW	Y	18/08/2020	Yes
Position 3 - (2018-2020 - 2 years)	Rostam Namaghi	RM	Y	18/08/2020	Yes
Position 4 - (2018-2020 - 2 years)	Idris Williams	IW	Y	18/08/2020	Yes
<b>Individual Member Representatives</b>					
Position 1 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Phil Rowsell	PJR	Y		
Position 2 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Will Burn	WB	Y		
Position 3 - (2018-2020 - 2 years)	Andrew McLeod	AM	Y		
Position 4 - (2018-2020 - 2 years)	Jenny Potts	JP	Y		
<b>Chairs of Standing Committees</b>					
Training Officer (2018-2021 - 3 years)	Nigel Atkins	NA	Y		
Equipment and Techniques Officer (2017- 2020 -3 years)	Mark Sims	MS	N		
<b>Regional Council Representatives</b>					
Cambrian Caving Council	Stuart France	SF	Y		
Council of Northern Caving Clubs	Tim Allen	TA	Y		
Council of Southern Caving Clubs	Linda Wilson	LW	Y		

Derbyshire Caving Association	Wayne Sheldon	WS	Y		
Devon and Cornwall Underground Council	David Jean	DJ	Y		
<b>Constituent Body Representatives</b>					
William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust	Richard Vooght	RV	Y		
Association of Caving Instructors	Stephan Natynczuk	SN	Y		
National Caving Scout Active Support Unit	Tony Radmall	TR	N		
British Cave Research Association	John Gunn	JG	Y		
National Association of Mining History Organisations	Steve Holding	SH	Y		
Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs	David Botcherby	DB	Y		
Cave Diving Group	Claire Cohen	CC	N		
British Cave Rescue Council	Emma Porter	EP	N		

## Non -Voting Positions

Position	Name & Initials	Atn (y/n)	Report Status	
			Last	New
BCA President	Mick Day MD	N		N/A
<b>Working Party Convenors</b>				
Information Technology Annual	Ari Cooper-Davis ACD	Y		
Youth and Development Annual	Josh White JW	Y		
Publication and Information Annual	Rostam Namaghi RN	Y		
CRoW Annual	David Rose DR	Y		
Qualifications Management Committee (QMC) Annual	Juliet Parker Smith JPS	N		
Vision Annual	Hellie Adams HA	Y		
Radon Annual	Gethin Thomas GT	Y		

<b>Additional BCA Appointments</b>					
Insurance Manager Annual	Howard Jones	HJJ	Y		
Membership Administrator Contract	Wendy Williams	WW	N		
Safeguarding Officer Annual	Chris Boardman	CB	Y		
Training Administrator Contract	Mary Wilde	MW	N		
Library Representative Annual	Jenny Potts	JP	Y		
Newsletter Editor Annual	David Rose	DR	Y		
UIS representative Annual	Andy Eavis	AE	Y		
European Speleological Federation Rep Annual	Ged Campion	GC	N		
Rope Testing Annual	Bob Mehew	BM	Y		
Artificial Cave Annual	Katie Eavis	KE	N		
Observers	Ed Waters				
	Allan Richardson				
	Robert Scott				

**(1) Apologies for absence.**

Ged Campion  
Tony Radnall

**(2) Council appointment of roles, elections and new Group Members:**

**Chair: Philip Rowsell, no other applicants**  
**C&A Officer: Will Burn, no other applicants**

Council voted unanimously to co-opt Phil and Will into their respective positions.

**(3) Chair's Vision**

The Vision Of the Chair of the British Caving Association

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

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

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

**My Vision**

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

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

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

**Medium & Long term:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My thanks and dedication

Phil Rowsell

#### **(4) Changes to working practices due to Covid-19**

##### **Teleconferencing of Council Meetings**

See Appendix for the Secretary's report regarding the validity of holding Council Meetings.

Council agreed unanimously to continue to hold meetings on Teleconferencing under continuous review by the Executive Committee for the foreseeable future and suspend protocols in the Manual of Operations pertaining to the timescales to service those meetings.

##### **Change to Reporting process.**

Now that we are moving to more regular video conference meetings, it is suggested that reports from the various standing committees, Working Groups etc move to a quarterly type report with a short update (if any) in between meeting. These will be logged in the new **Council Positions, Attendance and Report Status Table** at the start of the agenda/minutes; easily identifying the last report submitted and whether a new one has been received for the impending council meeting.

(5) Council accepted the minutes from Saturday 18th August 2020 Council Meeting with one amendment from JP, and one abstention.

(6) **Matters Arising.** None reported.

(7) **BCA Treasurer Update**

#### **BCA Treasurer Report to BCA Council August 2020**

Current bank balances: as at 07/08/2020 was £284,000. Of which £207,000 is in medium term interest bearing accounts and £10,000 is in a short term deposit account. I am holding more in the current account due to potential CRoW legal fees.

#### Abnormal Cash outflow since last Council meeting:

CNCC 2019 claim £1153

#### Budget 2020:

October 2019 Council meeting approved a budget for 2020 which had a deficit of £10,000. In January we approved significant expenditure on extra PL cover (£9k) and Adventure Academy project (£5k) and radon (£1k). Since then we approved £12,000 on the first batch of CRoW legal fees. If Council approve the next batch of CRoW legal fees and we lose the case (worst case scenario), the deficit for 2020 is likely to be in the order of £75k currently.

#### Regional accounts:

CNCC region submitted a claim for 2019 of £1,153, which was approved by Fin Com and paid.

#### Bank Interest cut March 2020

This is bad news for any entity with savings such as BCA. 2019 saw bank interest earned of £3,000. This will now drop going forward as banks reduce their savings offering. I estimate this will cost us £2,000 by 2021.

#### United Secure Bank

Is one of the banks BCA has a medium term savings account with. It recently decided to close all non-commercial accounts including ours. We are therefore in the process of claiming back our deposit and will move it to Redwood bank where there is headroom to invest and still be

insured. This action appears to be drawing to a close, with yet another “final” request for information having been answered this week.

HJJ August 2020

The Treasurer’s report was accepted unanimously.

#### **(8) Insurance Managers’ Report Council - August 2020**

The Treasurer updated his report to the meeting with information that the issue with a gap in BCRC cover had been resolved. The Meeting accepted his report.

#### **(9) Welsh Government Judicial Review Update**

BCA CRoW Access Working Group Convenor, Dave Rose, reported that nothing had happened since the last Council meeting but something possibly would in September. The Chair highlighted the need to have a plan to address all the likely outcomes from the legal action. TA pointed out that previously he, Bob Mehew and C&A group had prepared one, which was already in existence on the website.

#### **(10) IT Working Group Vision**

The IT WG Convenor, Ari Cooper-Davies referred to his report, previously circulated and highlighted key elements. NA proposed we welcome Ari on board and the Chair endorsed that commenting that right now he was the most important person on Council aside from the Treasurer holding the purse strings. He requested that all Council Members rally round and support Ari.

#### **IT Group Report**

Questions and comments to [it@british-caving.org.uk](mailto:it@british-caving.org.uk) please as I’d value the input of all stakeholders!

#### **Thanks**

Huge thanks to the previous ITWG Convenors David Cooke and Gary Douthwaite for their invaluable support and advice, despite neither of them wanting to be involved. Obviously thanks to the rest of the IT Group, particularly the new arrivals, and other BCA volunteers too, but you lot signed up for it.

#### **IT & The BCA: Moving Forward - Errata**

- Page 1:
  - all “unaffiliated personal and business sites” are billed to BCA members
  - BCA servers do not host video conferencing software
  - the failing of the BCA servers are more to do with software obsolescence, volunteer time, and security issues rather than cost or overloading due to web hosting
  - domain name management isn’t enormously volunteer time intensive

- my comment about the ITWG controlling BCA services rather than providing them was without having witnessed this for myself, and given that it may be considered “political” I would delete it.
- Page 2:
  - none of the BCA IT systems are undocumented, although for many it is lacking

## Vision

The most pressing projects are adaptations to enable the BCA to continue to operate in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. These include:

- eAGMs
  - Sourcing and licensing **video-conferencing software** for AGM participants (*Zoom*)
  - Identifying, testing, and implementing a **workflow for live-streaming** the AGM for members who wish to attend but not participate (*OBS Studio w/ YouTube/Facebook*)
  - Developing an **online voting system** to support voting from the membership at the AGM (*Gary's, for the time being*)
    - This will require developing a method for **updating member email addresses** - at the moment BCA Online is not synchronised to the membership database, so we need to either get BCA Online back up-to-date or develop a new method for members to update their email addresses.

Next, there's a strong membership demand for modernisation, collaboration, and improved services for members. As such the next cohort of projects are to meet this demand, including:

- Deploying a new **public facing website** to replace the Wiki (*Wordpress*)
- Deploying a new **membership administration system** to replace BCA Online (*CiviCRM*)
- Developing a new **online proposal system** in which members can open AGM proposals for online seconding and debate, much like a structured forum (*PHPBB*)

And finally there are the projects we'd like to tackle that add value for members, but aren't urgent in nature, such as:

- Developing an **attendance tracking system** for Council Meetings and AGMs so that group members and CIMs can easily follow how well represented they are within the BCA. This would also make life easier for the secretary.
- Consult with other committees and working groups to bring their projects to the attention of IT Group volunteers so that we can support and develop them, such as:
  - Visualisation of the results of the [rope testing group](#).
  - Support the [P&I group's](#) plans for a novel Photo Library

In the meantime: continue support, no new hosting customers, transition council emails to inboxes...

## (11) Y&D Working Group Vision

The Y&D WG Convenor, Josh White, referred to his report previously circulated and said he was concentrating on some key areas including the Universities through CHECC. Moving forward, he said he was open to any ideas from anyone about Y&D and to get in touch. He had built a slightly larger group of volunteers to help in specific areas whilst he concentrated on acting as a focal point to direct solutions to the right people and get things working as they should.

RN, TA and HB addressed the meeting with comments about helping University cavers with accommodation, travel and the possibility of grant funding from BCA. TA asked that Council consider if we are doing all that we can to help in current circumstances.

## Y&D Working Group

### Looking forwards

Having been voted into the role last month, I immediately set about expanding the working group, ensuring I retained as many members as possible of the previous committee who have provided a great service to Youth and Development. There is now a team of around 15 of us, covering all aspects of youth caving from Scouts to University cavers, and from club cavers to those involved in caving commercially.

My key concern when taking on the role was university caving, and how they would be able to deal with the Covid-19 situation, and I've been in discussions with Rob Watson and Botch, of CHECC to get some plans prepared that would prevent university caving clubs from losing too much momentum from having had to stop both caving and training for a large portion of the year. I've had a budget agreed by the treasurer which will allow for some additional training events.

A project I inherited but look to build on is the idea of a national youth caving team, and I'm fortunate that some new members of the working group are both suitable and keen for getting this off the ground. This may however take a backseat in the short term, whilst we take care of the number one priority (above).

Having got involved in caving through scouting, I've been looking at discussing the options for (re)starting caving for the Guide Association. These discussions are slow to start due to the reduced capacity at Guiding headquarters.

Under the 'development' part of the working group, I'd like to take a look at the diversity of cavers, and have recently started talking to an outdoors group aimed at black females, to try and get an understanding for what the barriers are for a) people of colour and b) females for getting into the outdoors. I've worked to try and increase the female representation within the working group, and there are now several who will be actively contributing to various projects.

I see the group as being fairly autonomous, with the freedom for members to take on projects outside of the ones I've listed above, and opportunities for collaboration within the group and with other working groups such as P&I to get to the shared goal of making caving as accessible for all. I would remain as the focal point of contact for anything Y+D related, through [youth@britishcaving.org.uk](mailto:youth@britishcaving.org.uk) or through other social media contact (UK Caving, Facebook). We

will remain in contact through a facebook group, where we'll be able to share ideas, and update each other. We'll also utilise Zoom for organising meetings.

## Y&D WORKING GROUP

### (12) P&I Working Group Vision

The P&I WG Convenor, Rostam Namaghi introduced his report thanking Jane Allen for all the good work she had delivered and referred to his aims to build a caving "Civil Service" offering a range of services to cavers. He is keen to put a clear communications strategy in place. It is all about talking and listening.

## The P&I Working Group Plan

The aims of the new P&I group is to help the BCA:

- communicate
- publish
- provide services
- promote caving

How are we going to do that?

Communication:

- Create a team that puts out a consistent message across all types of media and the website, all you will need to do is tell the P&I Officer what you want communicated and to who in particular - we will then come up with a strategy that achieves that.
- Survey our members about a wide range of topics in a more scientific way and more frequently so that we can listen more to what they are saying.

Publishing:

- The BCA has continued to publish despite the previous inactivity. The way this should work going forward is that a publication is generated by a working group on behalf of BCA, if it is in their remit we will just put it into a standardised format, if it exceeds their remit then we will contact the relevant groups for comment.

Services:

- Proof reading, Publication help (how to format/lobby for articles/editing help, What you need to do before an expedition to make reports and documentation easier etc), Survey publication help, image and film permissions.

Promotion:

- Creation of materials that promote caving as a whole, managing BCA's advertising resources and liaising with the media

What does that mean for Council now?

- email me with what you want communicated to the membership
- you are still able to use social media to discuss caving matters
- you are still able to post in an official capacity but be aware that you are responsible for what you say - P&I group is able to help you say it more eloquently and louder
- send us stuff you want updated on the website
- send us documents you want to be made to look more official
- you can't publish an external document without talking to us (internal minutes externally available are fine)

Please do let me know if you have any questions, and also try and point some more volunteers in my direction!

Rostam Namaghi

### **(13) Proposal for Operational Procedures and Constitution Review Work Group**

The Chair addressed the meeting and reported that In the short time he had been involved in the BCA council and even more so being co-opted Chair, it is very apparent that our current Constitution and Manual of Operations are not fit for purpose. This is further highlighted by the many proposals put forward to the 2020 AGM. In discussion with the Executive, rather than continue with this piecemeal process of change, we believe a Work Group should be set up, led by the Chair, to review both documents, propose changes to and seek agreement of Council for the implementation of those changes, with the explicit goal that changes will be put forward to the 2021 AGM for ratification.

Council Members offered their opinions in the discussion and the following points were to be taken into account:

- Not to have a piecemeal development.
- Needs to be structural change rather than based on a vision so that we can change our mind.
- Note the pros and cons of developing a vision v a structural approach of how the Constitution may work.
- Identifying the people to do it.
- Submit Terms of Reference as soon as possible and formalise the WG at the next council meeting.

Council agreed unanimously to the Proposal from the Chair seconded by the Secretary that a Working Group be established, led by the Chair, to review both the manual of operations and the Constitution, gain Council's approval of a proposed revision for ratification at the 2021 AGM.

### **(14) AGM Update**

The Chair gave an update and advised Council that the Executive are keen to have an AGM but bearing in mind the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, we will have to be flexible in our approach. How we can hold an electronic AGM has been discussed with AC-D who feels that we will be able to hold a hybrid system utilising Zoom for upto 100 and live streaming of the meeting followed by an on-line voting system to deal with any elections or proposals. AC-D confirmed it was very doable. RN noted plans to enhance the discussion around the AGM by having public debate shortly before the meeting. In response to a question by Ed Waters, AC-D confirmed that we will hold the voting after the meeting using registered emails.

A discussion ensued about uncontested positions with various issues aired about the interpretation the 2019 AGM had set requiring a vote on accepting a single candidate. RN rounded off the discussion by pointing out that a precedent had been set in 2019, which he hoped to address at the next meeting in September when his report on voting would be considered.

### **(15) BCA complaints - Update**

#### **a. Charterhouse Caving Company**

The Chair reported on the outcome of the Charterhouse Caving Company complaint where he had talked to all the parties involved and apologised on behalf of BCA to CCC for the circumstances surrounding what had happened. The Chair had met the Secretary, Pete Hann recently, agreed that the matter had been concluded and after exchanging letters confirming this, considered the matter was closed.

#### **b. Tim Allen et al Complaint.**

The Chair outlined the circumstances of the complaint including its serious nature, which the former Secretary had informed Council about on 5<sup>th</sup> May. TA outlined the details of their complaint and the Chair responded with a proposal from the Executive to deal with it. The Executive wish to end all the problems this has caused, leave it behind us and move forward and that we reject this complaint and vote on that.

A lengthy discussion ensued, the main points emerging from this being that Members felt the complaint was valid but we also needed to move on and leave the past behind us. Dave Rose, as one of the original complainants proposed that Council accepts that the complaint was a valid one, but the collective decision of Council is that it is no longer in the interests of the Association to pursue the matter any further and the complainants withdraw their complaint. TA, as one of the other complainants agreed with this and when put to Council was accepted as the solution to the matter.

### **(16) AOB**

None received

## **New Reports:**

List of those received:

1. From David Cooke carried over from 18<sup>th</sup> July 2020 Council meeting.

### **Web Services**

**Web Services Future.** Given that BCA Council, in their wisdom, sacked me as the ITWG Convenor at the last Council meeting, I have decided I will not stand again for the roll of Web Services Manager. I informed the Executive and Acting ITWG Convenor the day following the January Council meeting.

I also asked the following questions:

1. Is anyone willing to carry on with web hosting for the fee paying users (Clubs and some individuals)?
2. Is anyone willing to carry on with web hosting for the non-fee paying users (Regional Councils, Rescue Groups, Constituent Bodies, BCRA)?
3. Is anyone willing to carry on with acting as a domain registrar for the fee paying users?
4. Is anyone willing to carry on with acting as a domain registrar for the non-fee paying users?

**If Web Services is to be wound up then we need to give the users as much notice as possible.**

To date, some two half months later, I regret to say, I have had no answers from the ITWG Chairman or the Executive. If Web Services is to be shutdown then there are some 50 websites that need moving. That is a lot of work. I have offered to help make the transition as smooth as possible. But to be clear, having given 5 months notice, my commitment expires at the AGM. Time is already short. Some clarity is urgently required.

**BCA Online.** I need to make it clear since the January Council meeting I am no longer responsible for BCA Online. The responsibility has passed to the new ITWG Convenor (acting). BCA Online was first and foremost written by me to provide BCA with a GDPR compliant mailing list for the Newsletter. It performed that task admirably up until the last issue. It is a great pity that BCA was unable to email out the last Newsletter because it lacked an up to date list. This is because BCA Online has not been updated since January. The ITWG Convenor has full admin access so there is nothing preventing it from being updated. He has not contacted me about it.

Council should be aware that BCA Online contains numerous routines to cross check the membership database for errors. These creep in at an alarming rate because of the way BCA collects membership data. The effort needed to perform the same task manually would be huge if not impossible. Not having a completely reliable membership database obviously has implications for any future ballot.

David Cooke  
Apr 2020

### **Supplement since April's meeting was cancelled.**

Due to coronavirus the AGM has been moved to October. I said I would step down as Web Services Manager at the AGM. So whilst it is personally irritating it does at least mean there is more time to sort these issues out.

Re my 4 questions above, Gary Douthwaite in his report to Council for the April meeting said that he would answer "yes", however he has subsequently resigned. None of the ITWG have indicated they would be willing to take the responsibility alone. The Executive have left any decisions to me. Ari Cooper-Davis has indicated he would be standing at the AGM as the ITWG Convenor. He has my support. I think he'll be excellent. In a productive meeting with him at the end of April we agreed that the answer to question 1 was No, so Web Services for fee paying users is now in the process of being wound up. We did not come to a conclusion on questions 2-4.

David Cooke July 2020

### **Appendix**

#### **1. Proposal - Secretary Report re Teleconferencing Council Meetings**

The validity of holding Council Meetings by Teleconferencing has been raised so I thought it worthwhile presenting Council with a rationale for continuing to hold them with a view to this becoming the norm for the foreseeable future. The Manual of Operations (MoO) here:

<https://manual.british-caving.org.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=council:meetings>

describes the protocols for holding meetings and refers to the Venue:

*"Meetings may be held at any suitable location. It is desirable to choose somewhere relatively central and with suitable WIFI to allow participants to join remotely via video link. The venue should be available all day and have the capacity for at least 40 people (based on usual maximum attendance). Proximity to amenities (e.g. for lunch) and on-site parking and hot drinks facilities (tea/coffee) is recommended."*

In my opinion, a Teleconferencing Meeting more than admirably fulfils these requirements (amenities in particular) and even refers to the use of "video" such that we should have no concerns about the validity of the meeting.

The Constitution at 6.12 requires *"Council shall meet at least twice per year"*

[https://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=about:documents:bca\\_constitution](https://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=about:documents:bca_constitution)

Teleconferencing will allow us to meet more frequently than this requirement.

The inaugural Teleconferencing Council Meeting in July was successful and whilst I received a number of supportive emails for Teleconferencing meetings to be continued, there were no complaints and indeed, calls for meetings to be held in this manner more frequently with a reduced but targeted agenda. 2 hours appears to be the optimum meeting time period and correspondents commented on the benefit of having substantially more free time for themselves rather than giving up a whole day and significant travelling time to attend face to face meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August in the evening between 7.45 pm and 9.45 pm, another experiment to see how well it fits into Council Members lives.

Teleconferencing allows us to function and conduct the business of the Association and be more flexible in our approach to Meetings with the ability to almost react on the “hoof” if need be. However, it does bring us into conflict with MoO which imposes timelines in the run up to a meeting.

To take advantage of this new flexibility, I recommend Council suspend the timelines outlined in MoO for the foreseeable future but kept under continuous review by the Executive Committee for the most effective alternatives, which may be implemented.

Meetings that are more frequent will place additional pressure on the secretariat to produce agendas, minutes etc. and receive reports coupled with the need to give reasonable notice to Council of a forthcoming meeting. Monthly meetings have been suggested but in the early phase of this development, I would favour 6-week intervals in order to process documentation and allow circulation of matters to Council Members for consultation with their own members. I also favour production of more succinct minutes recording the critical issues and less detail to reduce the administrative burden.

The timeline I envisage will run something like this:

Meeting - 2 weeks to produce/circulate minutes – following 2 weeks receive agenda items for the next meeting - 4<sup>th</sup> week issue Agenda and associated documents – 6<sup>th</sup> week next meeting.

Noting that MoO states that *“The deadlines .... are not set in stone (and may need to be adjusted due to Secretary vacations for example), so cannot be used to invalidate a meeting,.....”* The key consideration is that we remain flexible about these arrangements, particularly having regard to the vagaries of the current Pandemic, in order to keep the business of the Association functioning.

In summary, we have a fantastic opportunity to exploit current technology to our advantage, which significantly outweighs any disadvantages. Our Treasurer notes that a “face to Face” meeting in the past, costs on average £1000.00, a significant saving along with other advantages.

Although we are still in the early stages of its use and finding how we may best use the technology, I present the following proposal for Council approval.

#### **Proposal by the Secretary**

That Council agree to continue to hold meetings on Teleconferencing under continuous review by the Executive Committee for the foreseeable future and suspend protocols in the Manual of Operations pertaining to the timescales to service those meetings.

Russell Myers  
Acting Secretary  
BCA 04/08/2020

#### **Action Plan from the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020 Council Meeting**

Issue	Who	By when	Signed off
Prepare a plan to address all potential outcomes from the CRoW legal action.	CRoW Working Group	ASAP	

Establish a Working Group to review the Constitution and Manual of Operations and produce terms of reference	Chair – Phil Rowsell	By the next Council Meeting in September	
Consider Rostam Namaghi' s Voting Procedure report at the September Council Meeting	Rostam Namaghi	By the next Council Meeting in September	

DRAFT