



Minutes of the Council Meeting Tuesday 30th March 2021

via Zoom
19.15 pm to 21:15 pm

Table of Contents:

Agenda item	Page	Agenda item summary
1	5	Apologies for absence
2	5	Acceptance of Minutes from 02/02/2021 Council Meeting
3	5	Matters Arising/Action List
4	6	Chairman's Report
5	7	Secretaries Report
6	7	BCA Treasurer Report
7	8	BCA Insurance Managers report
8	9	Other Reports
9	11	BCA Training
10	12	Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure
11	13	AGM Timeline
12	14	AOB
13	14	Date of next Council meeting

Appendices		
A		
B		
C		
D		

Next Meeting Important Agenda Items

Training Officer proposal **Action NA**

Council Positions, Attendance and Report Status Table

Voting Positions

Position	Name & Initials		Atn	Report Status	
			(y/n)	Last	New
BCA Executive					
Chairman (Acting) (2018- 2021) 3 years	Russell Myers	RM	y	30/03/2021	Yes
Secretary (Acting) (2019- 2022) 3 years	Allan Richardson	AR	y		
Treasurer (2020 - 2023) 3 years	Howard Jones	HJJ	y	30/03/2021	Yes
Group/Club Representatives					
Position 1 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Hellie Adams	HA	n		
Position 2 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Josh White	JW	y		
Position 3 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Lydia Leather	LL	n		
Position 4 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Idris Williams	IW	y		
Individual Member					

Representatives					
Position 1 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Pete Knight	PK	y		
Position 2 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Martin Hoff (See notes)	MH	y		
Position 3 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Jenny Potts	JP	y		
Position 4 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Andrew McLeod	AM	y		
Chairs of Standing Committees					
Training Officer (2018-2021 - 3 years)	Nigel Atkins	NA	y	30/03/2021	Yes
Equipment and Techniques Officer (2020-2023 -3 years) Co-opted	Mark Sims	MS	y	30/03/2021	Yes
Conservation & Access Officer (2019 – 2022 - 3 years)	Will Burn	WB	y	15/09/2020	No
Publications & Information Officer	Rostam Namaghi	RN	y	30/03/2021	Yes
Regional Council Representatives					
Cambrian Caving Council	Stuart France	SF	Y (arr late)		
Council of Northern Caving Clubs	Andrew Hinde	AH	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		
Constituent Body Representatives					

William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust	Richard Vooght	RV	n		
Association of Caving Instructors	Stephan Natynczuk	SN	y		
National Caving Scout Active Support Unit	Tony Radmall	TR	y		
British Cave Research Association	John Gunn	JG	Y (left 2030)		
National Association of Mining History Organisations	Steve Holding	SH	y		
Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs	Jennifer Ryder	JR	n		
Cave Diving Group	Claire Cohen	CC	n		
British Cave Rescue Council	Emma Porter	EP	n		

Non -Voting Positions

Position	Name & Initials		Atn	Report Status	
			(y/n)	Last	New
Working Group Convenors					
Information Technology	Ari Cooper-Davis	ACD		18/08/2020	No
Youth Development and	Josh White	JW	y	18/08/2020	No
CRoW Annual	David Rose	DR	Y (arr .late)	30/03/2021	No
Qualifications Management Committee (QMC)	Juliet Parker-Smith	JPS	y	02/12/2020	No
Vision	Hellie Adams	HA	n		

Radon	Gethin Thomas	GT	y	02/12/20	No
Additional BCA Appointments					
Insurance Manager	Howard Jones	HJJ	y	30/03/2021	Yes
Membership Administrator	Wendy Williams	WW	n	30/03/2021	Yes
Safeguarding Officer	Chris Boardman	CB	y		
Training Administrator	Mary Wild	MW	n		
Library Representative	Jenny Potts	JP	y	30/03/2021	Yes
Newsletter Editor	Davis Rose	DR	y		
UIS Representative	Andy Eavis	AE	y	30/03/2021	Yes
FSE Representative	Ged Campion	GC	n		
Rope Testing	Bob Mehew	BM	n	02/12/2020	No
Artificial Cave	Katie Eavis	KE	n		
QMC Representative 1	Vacant				
QMC Representative 2	Chris Boardman	CB	y		
Observers					
Cave Fest	Neil Maine		y		
CCC	John Sheehy		y		

Agenda item 1: Apologies for absence.

Ged Campion, Richard Vooght.

Lydia Leather, Jennifer Ryder

Agenda item 2: Acceptance of the 2nd February Meeting Minutes

Botch's name needs to be changed to Paul

Minutes passed, no additions or objections.

Agenda item 3: Matters arising/Action Plan

Action plan

Issue	Who	By when	Signed off
Radon group – formation of a Working Group to consider further survey work.	GT	Summer Season	
Contribution to Mick Day Memorial	AR	As required, still ongoing	
Distribution of IC Anchors by CNCC	AH	Ready if needed, in batches of 25	
Formation of Working Group to Review QMC	SF	Before the AGM	

Agenda item 4: BCA Chairman's Report

As reported.

The Chairman spoke on the 3 Counties Traverse project, the recommendation is that we step back from the project. The project is ongoing, BCA wishes the project well.

Agenda item 5: BCA Secretaries Report

From the meeting, RN is to supply details of who has voted and for what.

Action RN

Agenda item 6: BCA Treasurer's Report

From the meeting we are looking at a minimum £3/pa increase in BCA Subs.

JW questioned when were BCA subs last raised, not known at this point, but they have gone down several times in recent years.

Agenda Item 7: BCA Insurance Manager's report

Actions from last meeting

Cover of none BCA members for access agreements and landowner liability has been agreed with the underwriters.

AH questioned the wording, HJJ said it was in his report.

MS queried the timescale on outstanding claims, HJJ replied that was up to the underwriters.

Agenda Item 8: Other Reports

BCA Membership report for BCA Council March 2021

There is no update available re BCA membership.

One week ago membership income was down by £15,000 on this time last year, it is not known whether this is due to Covid or membership managers absence.

Ari Cooper Davis and David Gibson are to be thanked for their hard work in sorting out membership issues over the past few weeks.

The Council wishes to pass on its collective best wishes to Wendy Williams for a speedy recovery.

CROW

DR spoke as per his report, in that he needed an extension to the financial commitment of BCA.

Proposal

An extension to the budget in the Crow case to £90K as set out in the Treasurers report, which was agreed by Council.

Prop DR 2nd WB

Against LW, Abstention TR, rest in favour, passed.

E&T

MS apologised for his very brief report, it was sent in error.

The report in full will be added as an addendum to the next meeting.

MS plans to stand down at the next AGM.

Covid Plan

RN spoke to the plan, DR was concerned about student clubs and their continuation.

Proposal

To accept the Covid Strategy document.

Prop RN 2nd WB, no objections or abstentions, passed.

Action RN

Agenda Item 9: Training Officer and QMC

NA queried about paying instructors, he needs clarification.

AH suggested that the Training Committee comes back with a series of proposals to the next Council meeting.

NA is to get the Training Committee to come up with a decision as to what they want and to bring a proposal back to the next Council meeting.

Proposal

The Training Committee to convene and approach Council with a proposal to reverse the previous decision regarding payment of commercial instructors, when providing regional training, including a full transparency process.

Prop RM 2nd JP

One Abstention Wayne Sheldon, rest in favour, passed.

Action NA

Proposal

The role of the Training Officer in QMC, the result of an AGM says that they have no role in QMC, this was passed at the 2018 AGM.

Prop RM 2nd JP, no objections or abstentions, all in favour, passed.

Agenda Item 10: Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure

The policy as is was voted on

Proposal

Each member to complete and return to the Secretary by the next Council meeting.

Prop HJJ 2nd LW, no objections or abstention, all in favour, passed.

Action all

Agenda Item 11: AGM Timeline

RM had made an error on original dates, the notification of the AGM with the current details as per the email sent to AR on 29/3/21 to be sent out asap after meeting.

Action AR

JP brought up the problem of the constitution in that it doesn't really cover a virtual AGM.

Agenda Item 12: Any other business

Constitution and Manual of Operations working group.

This needs a convenor RM proposed Andrew Macleod
Prop RM 2nd JW elected with no objections or abstentions.

Cave Fest

Neil Maine-Jackson spoke to the issue, they are asking for £3.5K
He will put together all the relevant details and circulate the information. Council will then organise an email vote.

UIS

AE reported that the International Congress had been moved to 2022.

Proposed Trespass Law

HJJ asked WB to talk about the proposed increased Trespass Laws in his next report, and how it may affect caving.

SF spoke re the above law, the government had just changed the proposal, he will provide the info to WB.

Agenda Item 13: Date of next Council meeting

May 25th at 1915

Appendices

Reports:

Reports

Chairmans Report

Membership Administrator.

Council Members will be aware that Wendy Williams was taken ill recently, the Executive Committee have expressed our best wishes on behalf of BCA that she makes a speedy recovery. The Treasurer, Howard Jones is in touch with Wendy's family and will bring us up to date on her condition at the March meeting. In the interim, the Executive Committee met to develop a contingency plan to deal with membership administration and a team formed, largely from IT, to undertake this. I thank them personally, for stepping up to the mark and helping out in these difficult circumstances. I'll leave the Treasurer to elaborate on the detail.

Rope Testing Officer

As reported at the last Council Meeting, the Rope Testing Officer, Bob Mehew resigned his position and in consideration for the huge amount of work Bob has done for BCA and NCA before it, thought it appropriate with help from the Librarian, Jenny Potts to record at least some of his achievements below:

Rope Testing:

Bob took over the portable NCA Rope Testing Rig originally designed by Own Clark and continued to run it for BCA. Bob developed it from a simple rig, which broke specimens of rope supplied by cavers, to a much more sophisticated system with various electronic gauges attached to quantify the forces involved. The mobile version of the simple rig was taken round (towed behind a vehicle) to caving events such national conferences (later Hidden Earth) where Bob would set up outside the venue and break pieces of rope in front of an audience and discuss the results.

NCA Treasurer:

Bob was the last NCA Treasurer, (working with Mick Day as Chairman) and handed over in 2005 to the newly elected Jonathon Roberts at the inaugural meeting of BCA.

The transition between NCA and BCA:

Bob was heavily involved in the detailed discussions which took place from 2002-2005 and which led eventually to the founding of BCA as the successor to NCA with a new Constitution. Bob was involved in drafting the Constitution of BCA which allowed Individual Membership for the first time.

Advice on Legal and Parliamentary Matters, CRoW:

Bob has maintained a close watch on parliamentary matters and details of potential or proposed legislation which might have an effect on caving or cavers. He has continued to offer advice on various legal issues to successive members of the BCA Executive, most recently on the issues affecting caving due to the Covid-19 lockdown. He drafted the original booklet for BCA on the CRoW issues which was circulated at Hidden Earth in 2015. Assisted by information from Tim Allen and Jenny Potts on historical and regional issues, Bob wrote the detailed brief for Dinah Rose, the QC who gave the legal advice to BCA on CRoW.

Radon and other Health issues:

Bob has been able for many years to give advice from the professional perspective on radon issues to a number of convenors of NCA and BCA Working Groups. He drafted the information on Weils Disease which appeared on the BCA website and arranged for the production of the second set of the information cards issued to all BCA Members.

I am sure we have missed more than we recorded above but for the record, propose a vote of thanks for Bob's contribution to British caving.

The 3 Counties Traverse Project

The original idea for this project i.e. undertake a seriously challenging traverse from one extremity of the 3 Counties system to the other in one go, which has never been done before and use BCA backing both to support and take the opportunity to promote British Caving, has taken a different direction.

There is no longer a need for BCA to underwrite the cost of the project but equally the opportunity to publicise the project and promote British Caving has also receded. Suffice to say, the core group of cavers at the heart of the project and co-ordinated by the CDG, are determined to successfully achieve the objective and indeed, plan to accomplish it this year.

The situation is currently "fluid" and I shall update Council at the forthcoming meeting.

R. Myers

Chair

Secretaries Report

Good practice when using Zoom, please when you are leaving a meeting tell the Secretary or Chairman, also don't forget to use the Leave Meeting button. We had a couple of instances in the last meeting where this wasn't done.

Voting, it is a very laudable idea to record who is voting and for what by name, in practice this is very clumsy and time consuming.

If you record the names for Council meetings, then by logical extension it should apply to all BCA meetings including the AGM, where I believe there were several hundred people attending, all of whom had voting rights-----

We certainly need to make the recording of votes easier, whilst remembering what may work on a PC, may not work so well, if at all on a tablet or mobile phone, also what happens to the person who can only communicate with the meeting by voice? There is also a wide range of IT ability within the Council.

Treasurers Report

BCA Treasurer Report to BCA Council January 2021

Current bank balances: as at 17/03/2021 was £262,000. Of which £121,000 is in medium term interest bearing accounts and £86,000 is in a short term deposit account. I am holding more in the current account than usual due to potential CRoW legal fees.

Investment accounts:

One of our medium term investments is with United Trust bank. They have confirmed our renewal at January 2021 for a further year.

Unusual spend since last Council:

£3k BCRA Q1 2021 donation. £2k GPF 2021 donation. Y&D £280 yoga classes. £500 FES affiliation fee for 2021.

Income 2021:

An analysis of receipts for membership 2021 shows we are £15,000 down on each of the last 5 years, or 15% of our annual income. Unfortunately I have not been able to assess where the deficit is as we don't have accurate membership figures due to illness as reported elsewhere. Hopefully by next Council we will. Whether this is a Covid impact or whether it's a membership system being behind I can't therefore comment. If we don't catch up in the coming months then our membership income will be the lowest for a number of years.

Forecast 2021:

November 2020 Council meeting approved a budget for 2021 which had a deficit of £20,000. It had no allowance for any CRoW legal costs in 2021 beyond the £30k spent in 2020. Since then we have won the appeal and Council are to debate to increase the legal budget from £60k to £85k. If therefore the case goes the distance and we lose, the deficit for 2021 would be £70k. If we win then up to £35k of our costs would be refunded. (See separate paper). If our income does not

recover (see above) the deficit could be closer to £100k for the year, which would leave BCA with net assets of around £100k, a £150k reduction in 2 years.

BCA accounts result for 2020

These are a separate agenda item for approval. They have been independently examined and signed and also signed by Russell Myers BCA Chairman. As I predicted throughout last year we have reported our first ever deficit of £46k. This was mainly due to Council decisions during 2020 as follows: extra PL cover (£10k), Adventure Academy project (£5k), Radon (£3k) and CRoW legal fees £35k. Training has also shown a loss of £3k with reduced income and expenditure. Y&D spend is at an all-time high of £8k and regional support is at £6k. There have been some savings in meeting and travel costs.

Regional accounts:

Nothing to report.

CRoW financial situation.

A previous Council meeting agreed we could spend up to £60k pursuing this claim on the basis of its details and likely impact for UK caving as a whole. To date we have invested £35k in the legal proceedings. Should we win the case most of the costs we have incurred to date will be refunded. At present we are within budget with the proceedings.

HJJ March 2021.

Acceptance of 2020 A/c's, this was prop by HJJ 2nd JP

None against or abstentions Passed.

Insurance managers Report

BCA Insurance Managers report to BCA Council March 2021

Liability policy Renewal 2021:

The only item outstanding here is to declare our membership statistics in April 2021 and adjust the monthly payments accordingly.

Claims

We have two potential claims which we are discussing with the underwriters. BCA will pay the excess on the first claim by agreement and can decide whether to pay the second excess or not. Excess is £2,500.

One claim has been rejected several months ago and we have heard nothing since. The property has been repaired by the landowner. No reserve has been set by the under writer and if we hear nothing more then the file will be closed at the end of June 2021.

The second claim has been challenged by us and we sent a series of queries in November 2020 and we are awaiting a response. A reserve has been created by the under writers.

Until both claims are concluded without cost we won't receive our no claims bonus for 2020

Landowner indemnity

As reported at the last BCA Council there has been a query as to whether the BCA Public Liability policy extension to cover landowners who have negotiated access agreement with clubs or other

controlling bodies would extend to cavers who are not BCA members. Despite a lot of activity since the last meeting we do not yet have a resolution. I can however quote the following from our broker as of 17/3/2021. I will continue to push this matter to an acceptable resolution for BCA.

Howden, the insurance brokers to the BCA, have been in discussion with the BCA and the insurers around the Indemnity to Principles extension within the Public Liability policy and the extent to which it provides cover. We have always issued summary documents to BCA clubs advising of the extension and noted specific third parties (in this case landlords) as and when required. The recent queries have been around the topic of non-BCA members availing of this protection. The BCA have provided a detailed response to the insurer's queries as to understand the exposure in relation to these non-members, and we are awaiting a reply from the insurers.

We continue to push the insurers for a positive response, and will continue to support the BCA in this matter.

Mike Farrell Dip CII, Dip CMI, BA Hons

Account Executive

Brexit

Despite leaving the EU last December there is little clarity on how this will affect us from an insurance perspective as yet.

HJJ March 2021

BCA Membership report for BCA Council March 2021

In February 2021 Wendy Williams BCA Membership administrator had a stroke. She has been in an acute stroke ward ever since. I have been in contact with Les on a weekly basis and he has been over whelmed by the messages of love and support to both him and Wendy. Wendy is making slow but positive progress and we expect she will be off work for the foreseeable future. I have liaised between Les and BCA payroll accordingly.

The last two and first 3 months of each year are the busiest from a membership perspective unsurprisingly. So there is much to do. A small group consisting of Ari Cooper Davis, David Gibson and I (as volunteers) and Katie Eavis (as employee) have taken on the membership tasks as best we can. The report below is compiled from each of us. As you can see we have made good progress and learned a lot. It's been very helpful for Ari and David in their design of the new membership system. On behalf of BCA Council I would like to thank the small working party for their tremendous efforts in this matter.

Howard Jones:

I have been liaising with Les on matters of a personal nature and co coordinating the work of others. I have been handling general insurance queries until Katie gets up to speed. I have been processing DIM refunds via PayPal. I have been liaising with Les regarding cards and postage. I am grateful that BCRA have agreed that Katie can prioritise this new work over library work for the next few months, after which we can review staffing accordingly.

Income 2021:

An analysis of receipts for membership 2021 shows we are £15,000 down on each of the last 5 years, or 15% of our annual income. Unfortunately I have not been able to assess where the deficit is as we don't have accurate membership figures due to illness as reported elsewhere. Hopefully by next Council we will. Whether this is a Covid impact or whether it's a membership system being behind I can't therefore comment. If we don't catch up in the coming months then our membership income will be the lowest for a number of years.

Ari Cooper Davis

What has been done:

I have designed a membership database that will meet our needs, developed an API that can be used to query it, developed an administrative interface for it for Katie to use, ported in data from Wendy's "Master BCA Numbers" spread sheet and 2020 membership data, shown Katie how to use it, and given her access to membership@ emails.

What is still outstanding:

Katie's administration interface needs more features (for editing members and printing BCA cards for example), I need to give David Gibson a block of unused BCA numbers for new DIMs, I need to give David Gibson API access to the database for his DIMs system, and I need to fully document the new database. This list will grow as the line between "needs" and "wants" blurs.

Katie Eavis

What has been done:

Since taking over from Wendy I have learnt to use the system Ari has designed and processed almost the entire back log of club membership renewals and updates. I have started separate spread sheets to track payments, log anything that can't yet be checked but will need doing and also one for membership card printing. I have talked to Les and he has printed and hopefully posted the first batch of group and CIM cards. I am also in contact with David Gibson to send updates for the groups joining BCA and BCRA.

What is still outstanding:

I cannot process membership renewals for new BCA members. I think Ari is looking in to where we start issuing numbers so that can be included in his system.

I cannot yet check a club members who say they are DIMs really are DIMs. David Gibson is working on a system for this though. I still haven't been able to access any club membership renewals or updates sent between Wendy last working and the 24th Feb when Ari added me to the membership@ email address. Les has said he will check through and forward these.

Also there are details on the online system I am unable to update (Caver to Non-caver or name changes for example) but Ari is also working on this.

David Gibson:

What has been done:

I have taken over Wendy's operations relating to DIMs; and I have explained to Katie how to deal with the Groups spread sheet, which I will supervise. DIM Renewal reminders have been sent on paper to those without email addresses - everyone else had had an email reminder. I am responding to DIM renewal enquiries and am reporting, to those who ask, that DIM membership cards are delayed. Wendy and I had been discussing a number of significant revisions and upgrades to the membership processes, which I have continued to work on, with a bit more urgency than previously. These involve automating a number of currently manual operations such as cross-correlating banking and PayPal records with the "2021 Transaction log" records and the "Master BCA Numbers" list.

What is still outstanding:

Top of the list... When the "automation" process mentioned above is complete (soon), I will process the DIM membership applications and arrange for cards to be issued. I will produce a web-based interface for Katie to check membership numbers and DIM status, which she needs soon. I will produce further web-based interfaces for the treasurer to make use of. I will run a comparison of this year's and last year's GRP members and issue any reminders that are needed. Lower down the list I will continue with the upgrades that were already being planned for 2021, which include some changes to Katie's banking operations and an interface with Ari's new database, as well as a complete overhaul of the customer-facing parts of the DIM and GRP systems (CIMs, on the other hand, have always been outside my remit).

HJJ 19/3/2021

Training Officer and QMC

This item was postponed from the February Council Meeting to a reconvened date 16th February which, unfortunately, was cancelled due to the Training Officer's personal circumstances making his availability, as a key contributor to the issues to be considered, uncertain.

The issues remain to be resolved and given the time required to deal with the original issues at the December meeting, the Executive Committee recommend the issues outstanding are dealt with at a further meeting, convened to deal with those matters specifically.

One matter out with the above, for Council to consider is the following:-

Clarification of the Training Officer's Role undertaken by the Chair

For some time, dating back to the separation of Training into QMC and the Training Committee, the Training Officer has been concerned that his subsequent role has never been made clear as regards his involvement in both bodies. In researching this situation it is not overly clear where the role is defined in as much as there is no specific "job description" but then the only BCA Officer with a "job description" is the Secretary. However, it is clear that the intention to completely separate the TO from QMC is documented. The following synopsis describes this;

In 2018 Allan Butcher (a former Training Officer) was briefed to undertake a review of the Training arrangements and draw up Terms of Reference for both QMC and Training Committee, which he produced and presented to the Council Meeting held in April 2019. The Terms of Reference were accepted by Council and presented to the 2019 AGM and voted on and accepted. The TO's position

had still not been defined as such but Rostam Namaghi was asked for his opinion on the situation and concluded that the Terms of Reference reflected what the Training Officer should be doing. The Terms of Reference for the Training Committee do not describe any role for the Training Officer in QMC. My predecessor, Phil Rowsell confirmed that this had been intended all along following an interview about the review and Terms of Reference with Allan Butcher in September 2020.

To draw a line under this situation, the Executive propose that Council confirm that the current status of the Training Officer does NOT include any involvement within QMC and no involvement in the signing off any QMC certification.

(It should be noted that Council have voted to form a Training Liaison Support Group to link both QMC and Training Committee and the Training Officer has a position within this group along with representation from QMC, Equipment and Techniques Committee and the Executive Committee (if required)).

Conflict of Interest Policy

Upon appointment, each Council member will make a full, written disclosure of interests, such as relationships and posts held in other organisation(s), that could potentially result in a conflict of interest. This written disclosure will be kept on file for a period of six years beyond the cessation of the member's term on council and must be updated as appropriate. In the course of meetings or activities, Council members will disclose any interest(s) in a transaction or decision where there may be a conflict or potential conflict between the best interests of Association and any organisation(s) that the Council member is involved with. The intention is NOT to exclude any Council member from a vote or debate, merely to ensure transparency in decision making. This policy is intended to supplement the Constitution and any other BCA Policies.

All BCA Council Members (defined here as all on the Council mailing list) will strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the Association on the one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding both perceived and actual conflicts of interest. The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of the Association's decision-making process, to enable its members and stakeholders to have confidence in its integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputation of volunteers, staff and Council members. Examples of potential conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to):

1 A Council member who is also a club member taking a decision regarding whether fees from members should be altered. BCA recognise that this potential conflict is likely to apply to the majority of council members and in practice is unlikely to unfairly prejudice any such decision

2 A Council member who is related to a member of any staff taking a decision on staff pay and/or conditions.

3 A Council member who is also on the committee of an organisation that is competing for funding from BCA.

4 A Council member who has shares or an interest in a business that may be awarded a contract to do work for or provide services to the Association.

5 A Council member who is involved with decisions affecting the allocation of funds or work, who has interests, family members or friends who might benefit from the allocation.

Disclosures should be made to the BCRA secretary by post or email and should be updated on any relevant change of circumstances.

Example of a disclosure which must include your name and date:

I Howard Jones being a BCA Council member as at 02/02/2021 inform BCA Secretary that I am also currently Secretary of the Ghar Parau Foundation, as an organisation that usually receives a charitable donation from the BCA annually.

AGM Timeline

Following agreement to hold the AGM on Sunday October 10th 2021 the timeline of key dates running up to the meeting following Manual of Operations requirements works out as follows:

23 June notification of AGM and request for proposals, nominations etc. for receipt by midnight Monday 23rd August

Tuesday 24th August – Council Meeting (being the last pragmatic date to hold a Council Meeting in the run up to the AGM and allow a reasonable period for associated administrative work.

29th September latest date to post and circulate the AGM Agenda, including any proposals, Constitutional changes and nominations for Council positions.

26th September latest date for receipt of reports Officers.

3rd October - latest date to post on the website reports from Officers

Sunday October 10th 2021 – AGM

Compiled: Chair R. Myers

Equipment & Techniques

Test equipment

Anchor batch?

COVID equipment

Liaison group meeting testing belts

Following the concerns about BSI standards in my report to the last meeting, no concerns were raised by the E&T group.

Stepping down

British Caving Library (BCL) Report to BCA Council for 30 March 2021

1. Working under Covid Restrictions

When the restrictions first came out in March 2020 we felt we had to close the Glutton Bridge Library facility altogether and try to work from home. This proved impossible so after about a month we came up with a solution whereby the salaried Librarian (Mary Wilde) and Library Assistant (Katie Eavis) each worked in isolation at the Library on their appointed day whilst I worked in isolation at the Library at any other time, including most weekends. We put in precautions at the Library to cover Covid preventative issues and communicated with each other by email and phone. Mary and I were able to continue dealing with enquiries and cataloguing whilst Katie collected boxes of work to take home to continue with cataloguing.

2. Visitors and Enquiries

23 visits for research took place early in 2020 but as soon as the Covid Lockdown was put in place in March 2020 no further visits to the Library could be allowed. (There were 89 visits altogether, mainly to do research, during 2019.) We were able to accept deliveries of books and other materials by doing all transfers in the open air in the car park (swapping between car boots) and

using a 72 hour quarantine system for items brought into the Library. Volunteers taking surveys for cataloguing collected the items already prepared in boxes from the car park and returned them in a similar manner. The limitations on distance travelled during the most recent lockdown has halted this process but we hope to be able to re-start our delivery and collection system soon, even if actual visitors inside the Library are not allowed.

During the course of 2020 we dealt with a total of 97 enquiries (an increase of over 21% on the previous year) and the second highest number we have received in a year so far. Of these, 37 required research by the Librarians to respond, as opposed to 60 which were simple requests for a scan of an item from a journal. The time taken to deal with research enquiries varies from an hour or so to a number of hours spread over several days - adding up to a considerable percentage of time on site during the course of a year - during the next year we intend to try to quantify the time taken on these research requests.

Enquirers are not confined to cavers from Britain or abroad but come from other organisations who require particular information, sometimes for a book or other publication or even for a television broadcast or an article in a general interest publication. BCA members are not charged for our time but many make a donation in cash or provide a copy for the Library of the finished publication to which our research has contributed. Non-cavers usually make a donation in cash to Library funds. We handle a number of enquiries from cave scientists as some of our journals are very specialised; we have even found ourselves asked for a copy of a foreign language item no longer available in the enquirer's own country.

3. Progress in Cataloguing

Mary has now catalogued all the books from the original BCRA collection, including a number of unlisted foreign publications, and is now working through new items as they come in - we have well over 1000 books, expedition reports, gazetteers, theses, etc. now. She is also dealing with the immense task of cataloguing in detail all our foreign journals, both those from the original BCRA collection and the new ones coming in as exchanges for BCRA's Transactions, "Cave & Karst Science" - we have 30+ foreign exchanges going.

We have a large number of British caving clubs who regularly send us their latest publications, plus expeditions who send us their reports and we also buy books of interest to cavers, so the size of the Library is steadily increasing. Details of all new items as they come in and older items as they are catalogued are sent on to volunteer Martin Lavery to be entered into the Library's Online Bibliography and Catalogue. Books, journals, etc., are already on the system. We now have to work out how to include all the surveys and maps onto Martin's system so that details of these too are available online.

Having Katie working as a Library Assistant during 2020 has enabled huge progress in the enormous backlog of mixed and uncatalogued items inherited from the former BCRA Librarian in 2005 and 2007. (These items required 2 x 150 sq. ft. rooms at a storage facility to accommodate them initially, having been stored at the former Librarian's home until his death in 2007 because there was insufficient space on the 70 m of shelving allocated to BCRA at the Matlock Local Studies Library in 1980.) Katie has completed cataloguing in detail all UK Journals (the category for which there is most demand by enquirers) and has also completed the detailed cataloguing of all books and journals inherited from the late John Beck and Doug Nash in 2015. Having benefitted from Katie's hard work during the past 15 months, we have now lost her services while she takes on BCA Membership tasks during Wendy Williams' absence through illness. Katie is very much missed at BCL and we hope she will be able to return to us in time.

All duplicate items have been weeded out, listed and boxed and have been allocated to other caving libraries which want them to complete their holdings. We are waiting now to be able to deliver all these 20+ boxes by "caver post" as, until they have been transferred, we have insufficient room to house the next stack of material due to come in. This will be the caving library of the Yorkshire Ramblers, who have decided to pass on all their holdings to BCL; a small amount has already come to us and includes many items which are of archival interest.

The original BCRA Library had no surveys in its printed catalogue, last issued in 2003, and had nowhere to store them at the Matlock Library. However there were in fact hundreds bundled up together in a number of very large rolls and I have made a start on cataloguing these. There was so much material that BCL acquired 4 giant map chests to begin to house it all and the Library has been extended into a second room in the building dedicated to surveys and maps.

There have been a number of volunteers who have assisted with survey cataloguing from time to time and together we have completed 451 surveys and maps so far. Two volunteers took on the enormous task of cataloguing the entire collection left to BCL by John Beck in 2015 and in just over a year have so far catalogued 644 of these (133 cardboard tubes held a total of 526 surveys) and now have only the last remaining 4 drawers of John's 8-drawer map chest to go - but are currently held up by Covid restrictions. (These John Beck surveys are being scanned by DCA and will be available to all cavers via the DCA website, the first batch are now ready to go up on the website.) However, although well over 1000 surveys have now been catalogued so far, I am aware that there are probably several thousand more still to be dealt with.

4. Archive Material

All the BSA/Simpson material was removed from BCL in 2010 and transferred to the British Geological Survey (BGS) on permanent loan. It has since been digitised by volunteer Alan Jeffreys and others but, although the list of contents is available on the BGS website, the actual scanned content is currently unavailable; we hope to have this on a BCRA-hosted website and available to all cavers before too long.

BCL now receives a steady stream of archive material from all over Britain from relatives of cavers recently deceased, or cavers who want to "downsize"; much of this is in photographic form: glass slides, negatives and prints (both B/W and coloured), colour slides, etc. and not all of it is documented. Volunteer John Gardner maintains the BCRA Archives website as part of the Library website and the best of these items are available online there for cavers to enjoy. Very considerable effort is put in by John himself to identify and document these items, often aided by contributors to UKcaving.com who, between them, are very knowledgeable. However, the first port of call for deposit of this material is BCL at Glutton Bridge and sometime it takes a fair amount of time for the Librarian or myself to negotiate with the owners of the items and to liaise with them in identifying people and locations in photos. This is an area where we would benefit from having a locally-based volunteer with expertise to help us at BCL.

Also on the BCL website is the Audio Archive, consisting of interviews with well known cavers past and present. This also needs a knowledgeable volunteer to take it forward and organise the collection of more suitable interviews and also someone to handle the online posting of these items.

5. Volunteers

We still have many boxes of mixed and uncatalogued material, the remainder of the collection which came from the BCRA Librarian in 2007, and we need to continue sorting this material and cataloguing it. All books and journals have now been removed from the boxes and dealt with - what remains is probably mostly archive material. (Of particular interest are the Archives of the

NCA, some of which are now sorted and catalogued, but the majority remain in the boxes and, as part of the history of caving in Britain, need to be available.) There is also known to be material from past foreign expeditions. It all needs interested volunteers help in tackling it and this could be done by taking a carton or cartons away to sort them at home.

BCL relies very much on interested volunteers in order to be able to carry out all the work which needs doing and we desperately need more of them as the amount of work seems to increase all the time. Mary and I are in the process of listing all the tasks which could usefully be done by volunteers, either working at the Library for part of the time or taking home a batch of work to complete and return.

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