



BCA Council Meeting Tuesday 15th July 2021 Minutes

via Zoom

19.15 pm to 20.20 pm

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Next Meeting Important Agenda Items

Co-opt Steve Gray as acting Training Officer

Council Positions, Attendance and Report Status Table

Voting Positions

Position	Name	Initials	Atn	Report	
			(y/n)	Last	New
BCA Executive					
Chairman (Acting) (2018-2021) 3 years	Russell Myers	RM	y	15/07/2021	y
Secretary (Acting) (2019-2022) 3 years	Allan Richardson	AR	y	15/07/21	y
Treasurer (2020 - 2023) 3 years	Howard Jones	HJJ	y	15/07/2021	y
Group/Club Representatives					
Position 1 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Hellie Adams	HA	n		
Position 2 - (2019-2021 2 years)	Josh White	JW	n	25/05/21	n
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	n		
Position 2 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Martin Hoff (See notes)	MF	y		
Position 3 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Jenny Potts	JP	y	15/07/21	y
Position 4 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Andrew McLeod	AM	y	15/07/21	y
Chairs of Standing Committees					
Training Officer (2018-2021 - 3 years)	Nigel Atkins	NA	n		

Equipment and Techniques Officer (2020-2023 -3 years) Co-opted	Mark Sims	MS	n		
Conservation & Access Officer (2019 – 2022 - 3 years)	Will Burn	WB	y	30/03/2021	n
Publications & Information Officer	Rostam Namaghi	RN	y	15/07/2021	y
Regional Council Representatives					
Cambrian Caving Council	John Sheehy	JS	n		
Council of Northern Caving Clubs	Andrew Hinde	AH	y		
Council of Southern Caving Clubs	Ed Waters	EW	n		
Derbyshire Caving Association	Wayne Sheldon	WS	n		
Devon and Cornwall Underground Council	David Jean	DJ	y		
Constituent Body Representatives					
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	n		
National Association of Mining History Organisations	Steve Holding	SH	n		
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	
			(y/n)	Last	New
Working Group Convenors					
Information Technology	Ari Cooper-Davis	ACD	n	18/08/2020	n
Youth and Development	Josh White	JW	n	25/05/2021	n
CRoW Annual	David Rose	DR	n	15/07/2021	y
Qualifications Management Committee (QMC)	Juliet Parker-Smith	JPS	n	15/07/2021	y
Vision	Hellie Adams	HA	n		
Radon	Gethin Thomas	GT	y		n
Additional BCA Appointments					
Insurance Manager	Howard Jones	HJJ	y	15/07/2021	y
Membership Administrator	Wendy Williams	WW	n	15/07/2021	y
Safeguarding Officer	Chris Boardman	CB	n		
Training Administrator	Mary Wild	MW	n		
Library Representative	Jenny Potts	JP	y	15/07/2021	y
Newsletter Editor	David Rose	DR	n		
UIS Representative	Andy Eavis	AE	n	25/05/21	n
FSE Representative	Ged Champion	GC	n	2025/05/21	n
Rope Testing	Vacant				
Artificial Cave	Katie Eavis	KE	n		
QMC Representative 1	Vacant				

QMC Representative 2	Chris Boardman	CB	n		
Observers					
	Jo White	JW	y		
	Mike Higgins	MH	y		

Agenda item 1: Apologies for absence.

John Gunn, Steve Holding, David Rose, Josh White, Pete Knight, Juliet Parker-Smith, Stuart France.

Agenda item 2: Acceptance of the 25th May 2021 Meeting Minutes

Prop. Jenny Potts

2nd Howard Jones

1 abs, rest in favour, carried.

Agenda item 3: Matters arising/Action Plan

Andrew Hinde reported that the IC anchors distribution was complete

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	Secretary	As required	
Distribution of IC Anchors by CNCC	AH	02/02/2020	Complete 15/7/21
Formation of Working Group to Review QMC	SF	Before the AGM	
Cavefest funding email vote	RM	April	Complete

Agenda item 4: Chair's Report

Report of the Chair to Council Meeting on 15th July 2021

- Two Council Members have stood down since the last meeting and I am conscious of recording their contribution to the Association as volunteers and we should recognise the time and effort they have put in:

Wayne Sheldon represented Derbyshire Caving Association and is replaced by Mike Higgins, whom we welcome to Council and thank Wayne for his involvement.

Nigel Atkins has been Training Officer for the last three years and also in an acting role for the year before that giving four years of service. Below is information Jenny Potts (thanks for the historical back-up) provided me from an historical perspective to record Nigel's contribution to the Association:

“Nigel Atkins’ work as BCA Training Officer

Nigel was elected as DCA Training officer in 1990 and his first action that year was to set up a joint NCA/DCA weekend Training Workshop at Whitehall Open Country Activities Centre in Buxton.

This involved some 48 cavers in all over the two days as 5 different workshops ran at the same time with some people attending two different courses on successive days. Since that time Nigel has always set up each year a number of NCA/DCA or BCA/DCA Training Workshops at which all cavers were welcome - attendance was never confined to DCA members or Derbyshire clubs since no other regions were running Training Workshops like these.

In addition to his work as DCA Training Officer, Nigel was one of the first people in DCA trained to install the NCA-approved P-bolts when they first came into use in the 1990s and has placed these bolts in a number of Derbyshire caves.

As DCA Training Officer, since 1990 Nigel has been a member of firstly the NCA Training Committee and latterly the BCA Training Committee and throughout that time has promoted Training Workshops open to all cavers. At the same time, he set up a system in Derbyshire whereby clubs could run a training workshop for their members, with topics and venue chosen by the club, and able to “buy in” the necessary expertise to run the workshop, using grants from NCA/BCA to help, so that the cavers participating shared the reduced costs. Since Nigel became Acting BCA Training Officer in 2017 this system has now become the pattern for Training Workshops in other regions.

Nigel took over as Acting BCA Training Officer for a year following the resignation of Nigel Ball in 2017 and was then elected as BCA Training Officer in 2018. This period has seen the separation of QMC and the BCA Training Committee. Nigel is standing down as BCA Training Officer in 2021 but continues as DCA Training Officer.

In the early days of BCA an invitation came to set up a caving display and workshop at the Outdoor Exhibition at the Birmingham NEC. Nigel was involved in the publicity for that event and played a major part in organising the activities involving an artificial cave borrowed from the YHA. This continued for several years, until the YHA decided they did not want to loan their cave any more, at which point BCA dropped out because BCA itself did not own an artificial cave at that time.

Nigel and his “Band” have played a major role in various local and national caving events, up to and including BCA AGM Party Weekends and Hidden Earth, as the cavers’ preferred “Stomp Band”. Having a fine voice, he also provided the vocals for the song “The Joy of Caving”, (based on the tune of “The Sound of Silence”) which figured in the introduction at the Royal Geographical Society presentation on Caving. His signature tune is “Walking in the Air”.

I have thanked both Wayne and Nigel personally for their contributions.

Steve Gray, Chair of Red Rose CPC and Training Committee member has stepped forward for co-option as Acting Training Officer for the period up to the AGM to be determined at the forthcoming meeting.

- Constitution and Manual of Operations Working Group (COG)

The Group has worked throughout the year, driven by proposals for Constitutional Change from the 2020 AGM. The work to date has culminated in a report from the Group Convener, Andrew

McLeod, with recommendations for Council to consider. On behalf of the Association, I thank Andrew for picking up the “cudgel” of COG and producing a sterling piece of work along with colleagues who contributed to the Group. The report is enclosed in this Agenda for the forthcoming meeting.

- Three Counties Traverse

Whilst BCA has no further direct input to this, I have maintained close links with the group driving this, the CDG and thought you would appreciate news of some “proper” caving business. The project continues and significant progress has been made in preparing the route in anticipation of an attempt on the Traverse. CDG divers have been examining the connecting sumps and various entrances have been rigged to both give access to the dive sites and prepare for the attempt. So far so good.

- Chair Election

The current 3-year tenure of office for the position of Chair expires at his AGM and I can confirm that I will be standing for election to the position unanimously supported by my colleagues on the Executive Committee.

Russell Myers
BCA Chair
7th July 2021

No questions to the Chairman.

Agenda item 5: BCA Secretaries Report

A few reports were received via the new system, others were sent direct to me. One or two people reported a problem with the link to the new reporting system. The reporting system is still new and is a work in progress. I would ask people to use it as it will make for a more standardised Agenda and make the Secretaries life easier. Thanks to RN for his work so far.

I intend to stand for the post of Secretary at the forthcoming AGM.

Still awaiting action from RN from Mar 30th meeting

No questions to the Secretary

Agenda item 6: BCA Treasurer Report

BCA Treasurer Report to BCA Council July 2021

Current bank balances: as at 05/07/2021 was £258,000. 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.

Unusual spend since last Council:

BCRA second quarter donation £3,000. Y&D Yoga classes £280.

Income 2021:

An analysis of membership renewals 2021 shows we are 13% down on the 2020 membership figures. If this does not come back we will be £13,000 down on membership income budgeted for

the year .Since lock down has eased then there is a steady trickle of renewals. 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 agreed to increase the legal budget from £60k to £90k. 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. 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 were approved at the last Council meeting and will be presented to the AGM in October accordingly

Regional accounts:

CNCC claim received in May 2021, reviewed by BCA Finance Committee and paid. No other claims yet received.

CRoW financial situation.

A previous Council meeting agreed we could spend up to £90k 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.

No questions to the Treasurer

HJJ July 2021.

Proposal to increase the BCA membership fee from £17 to £20 from 1/1/2022

Executive summary:

For the last 2 years BCA has been spending more than it's been raising in income and reducing its reserves. The proposal to increase the membership fee is looking to alter that situation. The last fee increase was a long time ago. Some fees have reduced in the last few years.

Detail:

Income reduction

In the last few years BCA income has reduced for several reasons:

- Membership decline in 2021 , possibly impacted by Covid
- Reduction in club membership fee to a flat £25 per club
- Reduction in CIM fee to mirror DIM fee in 2020

It is forecast that between these 3 reasons BCA Income for 2021 will be the lowest for many years.

Increase in expenditure

BCA Council has agreed on-going increases in expenditure most notably as follows:

- Increase in Public Liability cover from £5m to £10m.
- Increase in subsidy of the National caving library.

The BCA C&A committee has also approved C&A projects in recent months that are out with or normal expenditure levels.

Reserves

BCA has built up reserves since its inception in 2003. Every year it has reported a surplus. 2020 was the first deficit in its history and 2021 will also record a deficit. Should the CRoW legal case

end in a loss then BCA reserves will have halved in 2 years. Our ability to continue to fund deficits going forward is therefore limited.

The proposed fee increase should allow BCA to balance its books unless of course another extraordinary issue such as CRoW comes along

BCA Executive 07072021

Questions re the proposal

The CSCC rep reported that a Mendip club had expressed concern over the proposal, coming on top of the pressures of Covid, that it might be a bar to cavers re-joining. Also could the increase be put off for a year?

Jenny Potts asked when were they last raised, the Treasurer reported that he believed it was at least 15 years since the last increase.

Andrew Hinde commented on the whether we could have a Direct Debit system, this is being looked into as part of the new membership system.

The Chairman reported that the increase will be from the start of 1/01/2022.

Prop Howard Jones

2nd Allan Richardson

2 abs 8 in favour, carried.

This will need to be ratified at the AGM

Action Chair/Secretary

Agenda Item 7: BCA Insurance Manager's report

BCA Insurance Managers report to BCA Council May 2021

Liability policy Renewal 2021:

The only item outstanding here was to declare our membership statistics in April 2021 and adjust the monthly payments accordingly. As we are operating under a temporary membership administration I have delayed this till end July 2021

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. The file on this claim has now been closed.

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 Council meeting we have been looking to extend the BCA public liability policy. I am pleased to report we have been successful. This is quite a result given we are increasing under writers liability to cover an estimated number of people who are not BCA members (the insured party) and we are not offering to pay a higher premium for the privilege. The fact we have succeeded is due to a number of factors including an excellent claim record, good relations ships with the broker and under writer and efforts back and forth between all parties since the New Year. I would like to thank Mike Farrell our broker for his efforts and Nick Williams my predecessor. The following definition of 'the insured' has been added to the policy in the 'indemnity to principals' section:

Any landowner or occupier who enters into an agreement with BCA or a BCA member organisation in order to permit access to caves on their land.

And the insured risk has been agreed as:

Any incident arising from the actions of cavers on the property of a landowner or occupier who has agreed to permit access to caves or abandoned mines on their land.

An updated paragraph that will go in the TWIMC letter is attached below to satisfy landowners who have been party to an access agreement:.

Updated TWIMC excerpt : (note we are awaiting final wording from the under writer)

If, as a result of the insured activities, any party brings a claim, which falls within the scope of 'What is covered, Claims against you', or non BCA members who have been granted permission to access the land, are liable for that claim, we will treat such claim as if made against you and make the same payment to that we would have made to you, provided

- has not, in insurers reasonable opinion, caused or contributed to the claim against them;
- accepts that your insurer can control the claim's defence and settlement in accordance with the terms of the policy;
- has not admitted liability or prejudiced the defence of the claim before insurers are notified of it;

gives insurers the information and co-operation reasonably required in order for them to deal with the claim

Brexit

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

HJJ July 2021

No questions to the Insurance Manager

Agenda Item 8 Membership

BCA Membership report for BCA Council July 2021

In February 2021 Wendy Williams BCA Membership administrator had a stroke. She had been in an acute stroke ward but is now back home. We expect she will be off work for the foreseeable future. I have liaised between Les and BCA payroll accordingly.

As previously reported the role has been divided between a number of us. You can see separate reports from Katie Eavis covering clubs and CIMs and one from David Gibson covering DIMs.

As can be seen we are around 15% down on membership numbers compared to 2020. Since lock downs have eased there has been a steady trickle of members re-joining.

Katie has picked up the role well and between the 3 of us we are dealing with all queries in a timely manner.

We have transferred the BCA Franking machine and card printing machine to Derbyshire and Katie is now catching up on the back log that had developed. David has tweaked the card and member letter printing system which appears to be working well.

HJJ 05072021

BCA club membership report.

Club Membership work

Regular emails are received with updates to club membership and a few renewals are still coming in. The majority of these can be dealt with swiftly.

Other enquiries also come in about the insurance cover, membership numbers, how to join etc.

A couple of weeks ago I collected the card printer, franking machine and printing supplies from Wendy and Les. Since then David Gibson has been most helpful in designing new card templates.

[SEP] I have printed over 900 CIM caving and non caving cards for a total of 74 clubs. These have been posted to about 50 clubs so far. I am hoping to post the remainder this week. [SEP]

Once all the club cards have been posted I will start on the DIMs cards. Again this will be possible thanks to the work David Gibson has put in to keeping track of DIM membership and helping with all the templates and admin.

2020 vs 2021 Membership levels

	2020 (up until 31st December)	2021 (up until 7th May)	2021 (up until 4th July)
Groups (including Member Clubs, Associates and Access Controlling Bodies)	166	150	158
CIMs (including Cavers, Non-Cavers, Students, Under 18s and CDG)	5308	4622	4797

2021 Clubs who have not renewed.

At the beginning of June I chased the 2020 clubs who had not renewed in 2021 again. A few have now renewed and others have started the process. These will have all been contacted by Wendy in December and have been chased by me in April and again in June. So I do not plan to chase them again.

A couple of other clubs that have been members before but not for a few years have also renewed recently.

Things still to do

- Finish printing and posting the remainder of the club card back log. Hopefully after that I should be able to print and post each week as updates come in.
- Print and post the DIM cards back log (all those received since Wendy was taken ill)
- Chase up payments.
- Keep working with Ari and Angus on a new online system for tracking membership.

BCA DIM Membership Report

At the time of writing, all DIM membership applications received by 28 June 2021 have been 'processed'. That essentially means that the transaction log has been checked and the applications confirmed by email 'where possible'. DIM cards have not yet been issued, but that is in hand. I have redesigned the templates for all classes of cards, in order to streamline the card printing process.

The original 'master spreadsheet' for DIM members no longer exists, and has been replaced by an online system. Periodically, I compile an 'output' from this system, in the form of a tab-separated data file that can be read into a spreadsheet when required (spreadsheets are still useful for mail-

merges, e.g. card printing and sending letters). For data security, I will not email these outputs to anybody unless you pick up your email directly from the BCA server. The alternative method of access is for authorised people to use webmail to access a special 'archive' mailbox – which I call the 'ledgers' mailbox. Katie and I regularly email data to that mail box that requires archiving. Live DIM Membership figures are now available from the web server, for authorised people to access.

The headline membership figure is that BCA currently has **676 DIMs**. This compares with **784** as of 31-Dec-2020.

There are 27 membership applications 'pending'. These are a 'bulk' application from Vietnam, who were late renewing from last year. These have not been processed yet because they require an adjustment to the system to allow bulk applications to be handled in a more efficient manner.

Selective list of items still to do

Continue to work on the M1 software.

With Katie: Check that members claiming to have paid insurance via their club really have done so. (and the converse:) check that CIMs claiming to be DIMs really are.

Work on developing the membership number database with Katie

Work on developing an online version of the banking spreadsheet, with Katie

Work on an online form M2 and M3

Longer term: recode the online form M1 so it is using up-to-date concepts and will work better on mobile devices.

Add a column to the DIM data that represents 'donations' or, 'payment miscompares', so that the sum of money listed in the DIM data outputs agrees with the sums of money collected via Paypal etc.

David Gibson, 05-July-2021

No questions to the Treasurer on the membership report.

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman expressed his thanks to the group who are sorting out the membership issues.

Agenda Item 9

Convenor's Report to Council for the Constitution Working Group

Andrew McLeod, 8th July 2021

The COG group has been working on three sets of proposals for the next BCA. All the proposals presented below have the approval of the COG group, and following the support of Council will be proposed by members of the COG group with a recommendation written by the COG group.

Section 10.1

The first group of proposals address a requirement from the 2020 BCA AGM that the BCA approve a 'new form of words' for Section 10.1 of the BCA Constitution. A consultation of BCA members was carried out, and a report written (available on the BCA website in the COG section) explaining how there are a wide range of opinions and concerns relating to Section 10.1.

For reference, the current Section 10.1 of the BCA Constitution reads:

"The Association shall not interfere in the affairs of a Member unless specifically requested to do so by that Member. The Association shall not mediate between Members unless requested by them in writing to do so."

Many consultees feel that Section 10.1 is important to preserve the autonomy of member bodies of the BCA. The principle of autonomy is an important one, and should not be disregarded, nor should the legitimate concerns of members. There is certainly no intention by the the group to encourage ‘interfere[nce] in the affairs of members’; the COG group would stress that autonomy is guaranteed in the BCA Constitution in section 2.1, and do not believe removing/amending Section 10.1 will change this.

Equally, many consultees believed Section 10.1 prevented the BCA from carrying out the work the membership expects. We believe the practical effect of Section 10.1 is small; autonomy is already a core part of the BCA Constitution, and it is not possible for anybody to provide mediation unless both parties agree (or it is not mediation). However, its vague nature can have a chilling effect on BCA work.

The report also includes three proposals for the AGM.

Our proposals give the following options for the membership at the 2021 AGM:

- 1) The voters may reject all the proposals (no proposal reaches the 70% threshold), and the status quo will remain.
- 2) The proposal to completely remove Section 10.1 may be successful.
- 3) One of the two proposals to amend Section 10.1 may be successful.

We therefore present three proposals. Proposals A and B were passed unanimously; proposal C was passed with less support.

AGM Proposals:

Proposal A:

This AGM proposes that:

- section 10.1 of the BCA Constitution be deleted entirely;
- the text ‘Notwithstanding Sub Section 10.1’ be removed from Sections 10.2 and 10.3;
- the other parts of Section 10 be renumbered accordingly;

UNLESS Proposal B or C receive a greater majority in the post-AGM online ballot than this proposal, in which case no part of this proposal takes effect.

Proposal B:

This AGM proposes that section 10.1 of the BCA Constitution is amended to:

- The Association shall not mediate between Members unless requested by them to do so.

UNLESS Proposal A or C receive a greater majority in the post-AGM online ballot than this proposal, in which case no part of this proposal takes effect.

Proposal C:

This AGM proposes that section 10.1 of the BCA Constitution is amended to:

- The Association shall not interfere in the affairs of a Member unless it is necessary to do so to investigate a complaint raised by another Member (the Complainant). Any action taken by the BCA should be the minimum possible to balance the competing rights and freedoms of the Member and the Complainant.

Note: Such rights would include those granted under the BCA Constitution and the principle of autonomy.

UNLESS Proposal A or B receive a greater majority in the post-AGM online ballot than this proposal, in which case no part of this proposal takes effect.

End proposals

To comply with the 2020 BCA AGM motion which required this work, we submit these proposals to Council for approval by a majority vote prior to proposal at the 2021 BCA AGM.

Reorganization of BCA committees and working groups

The BCA currently has a number of standing committees and working groups, together with a number of special-case situations such as the elected P&I Officer (with no committee). The COG group proposes the following changes as a single proposal. They will simplify the structure of BCA groups by removing Standing Committees from the BCA Constitution. Current standing committees will be replaced by Working Groups with terms of reference to be written by BCA Council (in accordance with the AGM motions).

AGM Proposal:

Replace the Training Committee and Equipment and Techniques Standing Committee with the Equipment and Training Working Group.

This group is to have national body and regional council representation in its Terms of Reference. It will co-ordinate and facilitate recreational training, manage the anchor programme and be responsible for strategic planning.

Simplify the structure of BCA groups by removing Standing Committees. ^{[[SEP]]} Re-form Conservation and Access as a working group with national body and regional council representation.

Constitutional changes to remove Standing Committees.

- Replace ‘Secretary, Treasurer together with Chairman of the Standing Committees (Section 7) with ‘Secretary, and Treasurer’ in section 6.1.
- Delete ‘and Chairmen of Standing Committees’ from section 8.12b.
- Replace ‘Standing Committees and others’ with ‘those’ in section 9.8.
- Replace ‘Sections 7 and 8’ with ‘Section 8’ in section 12.3.
- Delete Section 7 of the constitution and renumber subsequent sections and references.

End proposal

Note: if due to amendment of proposals E&T and Training were not to be combined, then they should be reformed as working groups.

Justification:

This is an effort to simplify working groups and reduce the number of people on council.

The differences between working groups and standing committees can be summarised as:

- Standing Committees can only be formed and altered at an AGM (including their terms of reference)
- Standing Committee Chairs have to be elected at the AGM
- Standing Committee Chairs have a vote at council.

They have different but similar requirements to working groups in the manual of operations. This, combined with a general confusion of who is due for election and who has a vote at a meeting (the P&I Officer being a working group convenor but also having vote for instance) makes the BCA bureaucracy impenetrable, less transparent and makes accountability harder.

Working groups terms of reference can specify regional and national body representation.

It can be helpful when groups become dysfunctional for council to appoint someone apolitical to run the group, as if it were part of the civil service, which helps if they do not have a vote.

Section 8

Section 8 of the constitution describes how General Meetings of the BCA are called and carried out. Covid has forced our AGMs online, and these changes aim to ensure that our constitution fully supports the option of an online general meeting. We have also taken the opportunity to tidy up a

few parts of this section, and fix some issues with the timeline of notices for General Meetings. We also make a change in section 6.1 which changes the constitution to match the current interpretation of the current constitution (for clarity only).

A document showing the changes made to Section 8, and another document of notes, will be made available on the BCA Website in the COG section. The proposed changes were approved unanimously by the COG group.

AGM Proposal:

- A subheading 'GENERAL MEETINGS' to be added to Section 8.
- Insert ', whether physical or teleconferencing' after 'General Meetings' in section 8.1.
- Replace 'place' with 'venue, whether physical or teleconferencing,' and 'General Meeting' with 'an Annual or Special General Meeting' in section 8.3.
- Replace 'on the day of the National Council meeting preceding the AGM' with 'of the 84th day (12 weeks) before the AGM' in section 8.4.
- Replace 'place' with 'venue' in section 8.5.
- Replace 'to members on request' with 'to all members not later than six weeks after the date of the meeting' in section 8.8.
- Add a subtitle 'VOTING AT GENERAL MEETINGS' to section 8.9.
- Replace 'lowest' with 'lower', and 'online vote' with 'online ballot of all individual members eligible to vote', and delete 'arising from a General Meeting' in section 8.9.
- Add a subtitle 'ONLINE BALLOT FOLLOWING GENERAL MEETINGS' to section 8.10.
- Replace 'approximately 30 days' with '14 days', and '>=70%' with 'not less than 70%' in section 8.10.
- Add a subtitle 'ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS' to section 8.11, and renumber to 8.11.a.
- Renumber section 8.12 to 8.11.b, and number the bulleted list i), ii), iii) and iv).
- Add a subtitle heading '8.12 SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS'.
- Renumber the first three sentences of section 8.13 to 8.12.a, and the latter two sentences to 8.12.b.
- Replace 'not less than 12 weeks' with 'not less than 84 days (12 weeks)', and 'place' with 'venue, whether physical or teleconferencing' in the new section 8.21.a.
- Add a subtitle heading '8.13 EMERGENCY GENERAL MEETINGS'.
- Renumber the first sentence of 8.14 as 8.13.a, and the latter sentences as 8.13.b.
- Add ', or by one member of the Executive and three other voting Council members' at the end of the new 8.13.a.
- Replace 'not less than 2 weeks' with 'not less than 14 days (2 weeks)' in the new section 8.13.b.
- Replace 'elected' with 'subject to a vote of approval by the individual membership' in section 6.1.

End proposal

No questions to the "COG"

Proposals for Council:

Proposal 1: Council supports submitting AGM Proposals A, B and C relating to Section 10.1 to the 2021 BCA AGM.

Proposers the "COG"
abs 2 rest in favour, carried.

Proposal 2: Council supports submitting the AGM Proposal relating to BCA Reorganization to the 2021 BCA AGM.

Proposers the “COG”
abs 2 rest in favour, carried.

Proposal 3: Council supports submitting the AGM Proposal relating to Section 8 to the 2021 BCA AGM.

Proposers the “COG”
4 abs rest in favour, carried.

A vote of thanks was recorded to the “COG”

Prop Andrew Hind
2nd Allan Richardson, 2 abs rest in favour, carried.

Action: Chair/Secretary

Agenda Item 10: Other Reports

Publications and Information (Rostam Namaghi)

Apologies – this is as brief as I could make it!

News Posts

Since the last meeting we have had 5 news stories, these have each had a reach of approximately 400 people on Facebook and 600-1000 views on UK Caving. A meeting and further discussion is needed with the ITWG to develop metrics for the website. An analysis of our Facebook posting times show that the most effective time to post is 09:00 to 13:00. Effective distribution and reach relies on regular content that is engaging and so careful co-ordination is needed for our surveys/important content.

Our autopost to UKC function is still broken but the ITWG is extremely busy with the membership database.

Services

I am delighted to announce our proof reading service has gone live on the website and is ready for advertising. There is no charge for this service but we do ask for two printed copies be made available to us once the work is finished (one for the British Caving library and one for the proof reader/s). An advert for the book will also be placed via BCA website and its social media. The BCA has a Flickr account with appropriate permissions to use for news stories – please see the link on the website if developing a document/resource that needs images.

Training on how to use BCA cloud, the mail system and the website is available if needed for council members. I have been waiting to tack it onto a planned physical meeting to start it.

Podcasts

The coming back to caving podcast found a very small audience (30 people) who left very positive feedback. There appears to be an appetite to learn about how caving functions in the UK. Somewhat bizarrely 60% of our listeners were in the United States with the UK coming after Switzerland. There are 3 podcasts recorded and ready to be distributed, this time with an organised campaign to generate further reach and engagement.

Information

The Club and Membership survey will go out once posts are reaching the numbers we had back in February (600-800 on Facebook and 600-1000 on UK Caving). Once the club consultation is back the club handbook document will be developed for publication.

The future

I am happy to announce that 11 of 13 aims of the working group have been fulfilled this year, with the remaining two in progress and hopefully done before the AGM. A formal meeting of P&I is due to be held within the next two months. This will establish the sustainability of various projects,

write a full roundup and future plans for the AGM, and identify a suitable person to replace me as P&I officer (should it become a council appointment: this is subject to changes at the AGM). Please note that a full Covid update report will be submitted for the next council meeting.

No Questions to Publications.

Radon WG Report (Gethin Thomas)

Data from the final round of radon sampling is starting to be received. Once all this data has been compiled, the data on the BCA website as well as various tables within the Radon Underground document will be updated. Work is ongoing to create an accessible summary info-graphic to explain and qualify the radon hazard in a meaningful way to cavers.

In addition the questions regarding potential concerns for Access Controlling Bodies and radon has been presented to a suitably qualified solicitor, at this stage enquiring to the potential costs related to seeking a legal interpretation of the concerns. Both these being actions from the meeting proposed at a previous BCA Council meeting. We're awaiting a response from the solicitor, this may be available for the next council meeting. I'm also hopeful that we'll have the basis for the info-graphic available within the next 3-4 weeks.

Given the proposal earlier on in the year for a fund accessible to cavers and clubs for further sampling is, in part, reliant on the two outstanding jobs noted above I'd suggest a decision on funding is postponed until early next year with the view of potentially supporting an initial round of sampling in the Summer of 2022.

On a personal note my workload is looking to increase significantly from the Autumn. I would be keen to look for another to take over the stewardship of the Radon Working Group from that point as I'm unlikely to be able to commit much time to the group. I'm happy to continue to work within the group should someone be willing to step up to the role of convener (if they feel that's appropriate) and so somewhat optimistically invite interest.

No Questions on the Radon report.

Library Report to BCA Council (Jenny Potts)

The end of most coronavirus-related restrictions has allowed us to use "caver post" to send 22 boxes of publications to re-stock a Mendip club library damaged by fire. Other duplicate materials will be on their way soon to clubs in other parts of the country and collections of archive materials are beginning to arrive in the Library once again.

The Peter Binns collection of caving photos from 1934 to the 1960s is now online in the BCRA Archives section of the Library website-material of historic importance to British caving, soon to be the subject of an article in Descent. An allied collection of material from Frank Butterfield, a relative of Binns by marriage, has thrown yet more light on the period and on the history of BSA and CRG immediately post-war.

Cataloguing of the John Beck legacy of Peak District surveys is nearly complete, thanks to two enthusiastic volunteers, who have so far dealt with over 670 items, some of which are now online and available to all cavers via the DCA website. Enquiries have continued to arrive by email: 32 so far this year to the end of June, on course to match previous years. 42% of enquiries require research, sometimes taking several hours, as opposed to simple requests for scans which can be dealt with in minutes. As dealing with enquiries has to take priority, cataloguing of publications has slowed since Katie Eavis transferred to working on BCA Membership.

No questions to the Library.

UIS report (Andy Eavis)

As the world is coming out of lock-down international caving and international caving politics is beginning to happen. The International Congress for 2021 was postponed till July 2022, however

the International Year of Caves and Karst has carried on, it is now over 18 months long rather than 12 months, so it will finish at the international Congress in France in July 2022.

A virtual vote by the country delegates of UIS decided unanimously for Brazil to host the International Congress in 2025. They did host a very successful congress in Brasilia in 2001. It will be in Belo Horizonte 27th July – 2nd August 2025. A preliminary video is available on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwjhHEKEDUQ>

This September 14th there is a UNESCO reception for the International Union of Speleology in Paris at the UNESCO headquarters, I will attend, and I hope that Ged Campion as President of the European Federation will also be able to go, we do not know what the travel restrictions will be like at that time.

There are various International Year of Caves and Karst events going on around the world. Our BCRA Monday evening lecture series continues with the second Monday in the month, so far, they have all been very good, many are available online and more will be available in the future. Sad news that and Adolfo Eraso, Christian Dodelin, two senior UIS people have both died recently. Christian from France was very involved with French and International Cave Rescue and a particularly nice guy. Adolfo Eraso from Spain was UIS Secretary 1977-1981, President 81-86 and an honorary bureau member. It is a great shame both of them have passed away.

To look at the past events of the International Year of Caves and Karst, please see:

www.iyck2021.org The UIS bulletin is due to be published online shortly so please watch the UIS website www.uis-speleo.org As ever, keep an eye on these websites, I look forward to seeing people at the Zoom meeting on 15th July,

No questions on the UIS report.

QMC report to Council - July 2021 ^[11]_[SEP]As government covid restrictions are relaxed, we are seeing the gradual reopening of outdoor education facilities. Correspondingly, BCA award holders are steadily re-engaging with our award schemes. We have scheduled LCMLA update workshops in each region in September, to draw as many award holders back into the system, post lockdown, as we can. ^[11]_[SEP] The three year term in office for both chair and deputy chair of QMC come to an end this November. Details of both positions have been sent out to all Trainer/Assessors for the award schemes and we hope to short list and appoint in September. Having been in position as chair for the past 3 years, I will not be reapplying for the position, but wish my successor well. ^[11]_[SEP]

Juliet Parker-Smith (QMC chair)

No questions to QMC

Agenda Item 11:

The AGM update will be covered at the next meeting on the 27/07/21, where it is planned to be the only item of business.

No reports are required for this meeting.

Action: Chair

Agenda Item 12: CRoW

David Rose reported that the next court date is now in September 2021, nothing else to report.

Agenda Item 13: Any Other Business

1) Steve Gray has volunteered to be the Training Officer up to the AGM.

This is a co-option

prop Howard Jones

2nd Rostam Namaghi unanimous, carried.

2)Andrew Hinde reported that the Government Initiative “Farming in a Protected Landscape” had possible benefits for caving access.

Secretary to contact C&A Convener to ask Conservation and Access Group who should be looking into this and to involve the Regional Councils, whilst emphasising its potential.

Action: Secretary to contact C&A

Agenda Item 14: Date of next Council meeting

Tuesday 27th July at 19.15

Appendices