



Minutes of Council Meeting Tuesday 22nd November 2022

The meeting was held by Zoom
19.00 pm to 21:00 pm

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Next Meeting Important Agenda Items

BCA Council Diary 2023

	Date
Council	Tuesday 17 th January 2023
AGM Notification posted no later than:	Sunday 5 th February 2023
AGM deadline for receipt of nominations, proposals etc.	Midnight 19 th March 2023
Council	Tuesday 14 th March 2023
AGM Agenda posted no later than:	30 th April 2023
Council	Tuesday 9 th May 2023
AGM	Sunday 11 th June 2023
AGM deadline for receipt of reports:	28 th May 2023
AGM deadline for posting reports:	4 th June 2023
Council following the AGM	27th June (Approve WG's and Convenors)
AGM on-line voting until:	Midnight 25 th June 2023

Council Positions

Voting Position	Name	Initials
BCA Executive		
Chair 21-24 (3 years)	Russell Myers	RM
Secretary 21-24 (3 years)	Allan Richardson	AR
Treasurer 20-23 (3years)	Howard Jones	HJJ
Group/Club Reps		
Position 1, 21-23 (2 years)	Josh White	JW
Position 2, 22-24 (2 years)	Jenny Potts	JP
Individual Member Reps		
Position 1, 21-23 (2 years)	Nigel Atkins	NA
Position 2, 20-22 (2 years)	Andy Eavis	AE
Regional Council Reps		
CCC		
CNCC	Andrew Hinde	AH
CSCC	Linda Wilson	LW
DCA	Mike Higgins	MH
DCUC	David Jean	DJ
Constituent Body Reps		
William Pengelly CST	Richard Vooght	RV
Assoc. Cave Instructors	Stephan Natynczuk	SN
National Caving Scout Active Support Unit	Tony Radmall	TR
BCRA	John Gunn	JG
NAMHO	Steve Holding	SH

CHECC	Jennifer Ryder	JR
CDG	Claire Cohen	CC
BCRC	Emma Porter	EP

Non Voting Positions	Name	Initials
Working Group Convenors		
Training and Equipment	Steve Gray	
Conservation and Access	Vacant	
Information Technology	Ari Cooper-Davis	ACD
Youth and Development	Josh White	JW
QMC	George Plant	GP
CoG	Andrew McLeod	AM
Radon	Vacant	
P & I	Vacant	
Additional BCA Appointments		
Insurance Manager	Howard Jones	HJJ
Membership Administrator	Katie Eavis	KE
Safeguarding Officer	Chris Boardman	CB
Training Administrator	Mary Wild	MW
Library Representative	Jenny Potts	JP
Newsletter Editor	Vacant	
UIS Representative	Andy Eavis	AE
FSE Representative	Ged Campion	GC
Artificial Cave	Katie Eavis	KE
QMC Representative 1 (observer)	BCA Chair	
QMC Representative 2 (observer)	Chris Boardman	CB

Present

Russell Myers, Allan Richardson, Andrew Hinde, Mike Higgins, Jenny Potts, Imogen Campion, Bob Mehew (left after his report), Linda Wilson, David Jean, Richard Vooght, Howard Jones, Ged Campion, George Plant, Josh white, Chris Boardman arrived at end of meeting.

Agenda item 1: Apologies for absence

Tony Radmall. Andrew McLeod, Ged Campion, Andy Eavis

Agenda item 2: Acceptance of the 27th September 2022 Meeting Minutes

Prop JP

2nd MH

All in favour

Agenda item 4: Matters arising/Action Plan

Issue of BCA Strategy raised by JW, discuss under AOB

Issue	Who	By when	Signed off

Agenda item 5: Vacancies

Agenda item 6: Chair's Report

For some time we have had a vacancy in the Publications and Information Officer's post so I am pleased to inform Council that we have now got some assistance with regard to the publicity aspects of the role. Imogen Campion has accepted an offer from the Executive Committee to help manage publicity for the Association. I should stress that this is not to fill the P&I position but to concentrate on publicity material through the BCA website and Facebook account. Imogen has made a good start by publicising the recent BBC 2 transmission of the BBC Wales documentary The Rescue originally screened in Wales but transmitted nationwide on Thursday 3rd November. At the last check, the Facebook page has received over 14,500 views boding well for the future. Leads for useful material publicising the Association would be very much appreciated. In this respect, with the close association of BCA and BCRA, an initiative is being developed to consider areas of mutual benefit which could be publicised.

Progress has been made in finding a new home for the Rope Testing Rig with an offer to house the equipment in Derbyshire. The details are still being determined and will require some expenditure on steelwork for which a proposal has been made from Bob Mehew later in the Agenda.

Bob gave a brief rundown on the 2 rope testing rigs, Not all the parts of the Dynamic rig could be retrieved, but the tensile rig is complete.

There is an ongoing need for equipment testing, the equipment Committee has also asked for testing facilities.

Bob will not stand as Rope Testing Officer, there were other people possibly interested in the post. Glynn in Derbyshire has offered to house the rigs, the missing parts will need to be replaced.

Bob was asking for a grant from BCA for about £1500 for materials.

RM asked HJ re money, no money available in current budget, but he will include it in next years budget.

AR was concerned that there was nobody in charge of the project, someone should be in charge before we spend any money, RM replied that the Training and equipment group were meeting soon and would be looking at this.

RM proposed that we spend £1500 as long as someone is in charge of the project.

AH said that this was a BCA asset and we should invest in it.

Prop AH

2nd JP

Abs JW, rest all in favour, passed.

Bon Mehew then left the meeting.

Russell introduced Imogen to the meeting, in the last couple of weeks she managed to get the info out about the George Linnane rescue TV program, which has been well received.

Kendal Mountain film

Also working with BCRA Publicity via LW

Imogen said she is writing short journalistic news pieces for BCRA, so is looking for news, eg the Rope Testing Rig and the Anniversary of BCA

Agenda item 7: BCA Secretaries Report

Nothing to report.

Nothing to add

Council List needs reviewing

Agenda item 8: BCA Treasurer Report

BCA Treasurer Report to BCA Council November 2022

Current bank balances: as at 11/11/2022 was £208,000. Of which £88,000 is in medium term interest bearing accounts and £77,000 is in a short term deposit account.

Bank accounts:

Base interest rate is above 1% for the first time in a long time and is forecast to be 4% by middle of 2023. To that end I am opening a deposit account with HSBC for short term interest, until now the 0.1% offered was not worth the hassle. For organisations such as BCA that have cash savings, rising interest rates are good news.

Unusual spend since last Council:

Plastic cards £1,000.

BCA Region claims for 2021 paid in 2022

CSCC

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 paid £67k and there is a further £13k due to the lawyers for recent work, taking the total cost to £80k as budgeted on our own lawyer (which he acknowledges).

HJJ November 2022.

JW asked if there was any progress re appointment of a new Treasurer, the answer is no.

Agenda Item 9: BCA Insurance Manager's report

Claims

We have no outstanding claims. Hence we have received a no claims bonus of £1,200 for 2021. The 2 claims we received in 2020 have both been vigorously defended and have gone away.

Public Liability Policy renewal as at 1/1/2023

We have started the process and have had discussions with Howden's our broker about 2023 renewal. It was noted that the BMC claim looks likely to pay out near the reserve value of £10m.

All necessary data has been supplied to the under writers for renewal and we look forward to our discussions. Our objective will be to secure a multiyear policy

Howard Jones BCA Insurance Manager 11/11/2022

No comments

Agenda Item 10: Membership Report

BCA membership update

Work is on-going for membership renewal as at 1/1/2023

Reminders have been sent to all clubs

Plastic cards have been ordered at a cost of £1,000, be good to get rid of these one day for environmental and cost reasons

Howard Jones BCA Treasurer

JW comment re why we were still using plastic cards at c£1000 per annum

AR pointed out that some mine sites still need them, JW asked was it worth £1000 pa?

HJ replied that the new membership system would allow individuals to have proof of BCA membership, probably in PDF format.

Agenda Item 11: Other Reports

Library Report to BCA Council, 22 November 2022

We are now well on the way to ensuring that BSA/Simpson archive material, currently on permanent loan from the Library to British Geological Survey at Keyworth, is made more accessible to enquirers. This is thanks to a new agreement between BGS and BCRA, by which BCRA will host the digitised material on its website together with a detailed new index compiled by Alan Jeffreys. Other archive surveys and maps from this era are now being catalogued by our two volunteers and will be stored at Glutton Bridge.

Cataloguing of modern surveys and maps is also now well under way, thanks to our Library Assistant, and these will gradually be incorporated into the online bibliography/catalogue. We now have a large collection of duplicate material, the result of donations to the Library, and we continue to seek a good home for these with other caving Libraries or individual caver collectors.

Jenny Potts,

Nothing to add and no comments

FSE delegate report

A very short report this time.

The FSE comprises 31 countries in Europe and beyond.

The FSE last General Assembly Meeting (GAM) was held at the International Congress of Speleology (ICS between 24th and 31st July this year in Bourget Du Lac, Savoie, France.

Countries and members of the bureau have remained the same with no new additions this time. Details of the meeting can be found in the minutes of the GAM.

Considerable work continues to be invested in maintaining the system of sponsoring European projects, through the EuroSpeleo Projects (ESP), the EuroSpeleo Forums (ESF), as well as the EuroSpeleo Protection Label (ESPL).

The new FSE (more sophisticated) website is now operational.

The next GAM of the FSE will be held in Germany in May 2023. More details will be available soon.

Ged Champion.

BCA delegate to FSE

Nothing to add and no comments.

UIS Report

(I've completed this in Andy Eavis's absence. He is currently on an expedition in Mulu).

A UIS bureau was held on 27.10.22.

There are two issues pertinent to the BCA & BCRA.

1). A discussion took place regarding a document entitled "White Paper on Responsible Speleology" published in August 2022. It was circulated by a "Task Group on Responsible Speleology" in the International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG). There are three authors and the document was reviewed by four named persons and "other anonymous experts". The UIS, The Cave and Karst Working Group in the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (CKWG) and The International Association of Show Caves (ISCA) have prepared a statement making their concerns known about this document and recommend to the IAPG that it is withdrawn.

The statement explains that "this White Paper does nothing to advance the cause of responsible speleology and to the contrary may confuse some people or agencies who think that it has been produced by responsible, well-informed speleologists acting on behalf of the wider community. In particular, it is poorly written and structured, superficial, over-generalised and in places factually incorrect. It adds nothing that is not covered in much greater detail in other guidelines or caving codes of conduct. "

2). N. Zupan Hajna, the president of the UIS, raised the idea of countries around the world listing their endangered cave and karst features which would appear on the UIS website. It was proposed that a working group be set up to address this issue. It would be designed to appraise the status of karst worldwide. It would start with a list of endangered features from each countries delegate. A questionnaire would be produced for delegates to complete. Presidents of appropriate commissions would also be involved (eg. UIS Commission on Protection of Caves and Karst) as well as

presidents and chairpersons, regional bodies and of other relevant groups. I've contacted John Gunn asking him how we might want approach this request.

Ged Champion (UIS Adjunct Secretary).

Ged reported that the UIS has now submitted their statement on the Paper "Responsible Speleology" with a request that it is withdrawn. This went to the group on Nov 2nd and are awaiting a response.

LW supported the UIS position.

RM was concerned about the report and that we need to keep an eye on what is going on.

JW commented on the UIS listing endangered caves and Karst, GC reported that this was a work in progress.

QMC Report to Council – November 2022

QMC seems to have been a busy place over the last few months. We've had a couple of disputes to deal with and lots of input from Trainer/Assessors to try and action.

The disputes have challenged us because they are few and far between so our procedures have been tested and had a little bit of a polishing. Looking at this holistically, it will just improve matters as we amend and update our systems.

T/As and other Cave Leaders have been good at providing feedback relating to the JustGo Qualification Management System. This is still new to a lot of people and we are still finding our collective feet with it to some degree. It's a fantastic resource, saving both time and money, but we are having to adapt how we operate – Gethin and Mary are fast becoming IT wizards! Obviously we want this to work perfectly for everyone but there will be a bit of compromise needed from all parties.

I have become involved with an informal Adventure Sports Group comprising the Chairs of the Qualifications for Mountain Training, British Canoeing and British Cycling. The idea being that we can help each other out with shared experiences, problems and solutions. The main work we have done so far is to write the Qualification Matrices for our respective sports but in a shared format. The HSE through AALS (Adventurous Activities Licensing Service) used to do this but it has now fallen to us to maintain this piece of work that is vital information for the many Outdoor Centres out there.

George Plant

No additions

RM commented on the Liaison Committee between Training and Equipment, potential for the committee to get together in the near future.

LW asked about any recent reports from Training Committee, RM replied that for some reason SG is not on the Council distribution list, RM to talk to ACD. RM reported that the group had met twice this year and there were minutes in circulation.

AH asked to remind the Training Committee that he still had a box of AC Anchors at his house, RM to sort.

JP assumed that the minutes for these and other groups do not appear on the BCA website. RM agreed, JW said they are there under standing committees rather than working groups, this needs to be sorted, not sure by whom.

JP pointed out that the position of Convener was a non job, there was a lack of understanding of the position of convener with a corresponding difficulty in recruiting one.

RM replied that a convener was an important position, there was a lot of work to be done sorting things out and getting information onto the website, there was simply a lack of volunteers, but he was working on it.

JW said that people simply didn't want to do the various jobs.

LW asked that in the absence of reports from the various groups, could their minutes be circulated to Council, RM said that he was equally guilty of not circulating minutes, but would do so in future.

AR said that a report from SG came out today, but not to all Council members.

RM said that the council list needs updating.

JP said she needed someone to copy things to so that they could upload them to the website.

JW said he was available to help with uploading to the website.

AR pointed out that we need to get more IT support.

JW said that we need an area on the website where it was easy for Council Members to upload information.

LW said that we need to buy in some IT support in the absence of volunteers, JW agreed with this. HJ had got one of the BCA staff to do some extra IT work, one has agreed, after three months the IT manager has not sat down with the person to get her to start doing the work. LW asked was there a way into the back end of the system to allow someone else to upload into the system. JW has some access to the Cloud part of the system, but didn't know if that was suitable. JW asked HJ to copy him with what we were looking for and he would look into it, he had some time in December. RM said that a lot of the problem was the availability of ACD, he would look into the problem.

Minutes BCA Conservation and Access Working Group

Held on 10.10.22 at 7.30pm by Zoom

1. Introduction and Apologies: apologies from Jenny Potts

In attendance: Bob Mehew (BM) - BCA Radon W.P.

Linda Wilson (LW) - Charterhouse Caving Co. Ltd. (Cons. Off)

Wayne Starsmore (WS) - Council of Southern Caving Clubs

John Hine (JH) - Nat. Assoc. of Mining History Organisations

VK opened the meeting as Convenor of Meeting

2. ACTIONS:

1 Identify and circulate ToR for BCA Working Groups and also past BCA C&A Committee: Done

2 Begin process of drafting ToR for the BCA C&A WG: BM has drafted new TOR, see Annex 1: completed

3 JP to contact CNCC, DCA & Cambrian C.C. to ask for statement of claims for reimbursement for C&A expenses to go to BCA Finance WG not later than mid-September: Completed

4 Agree on a Convenor for the C&AWG to act for at least the next meeting: Completed

5 Contact BCA IT WG to confirm date of next C&A WG meeting: evening of 19 Sept 2022 and book a slot for BCA Zoom: Completed

6 Circulate details of the Dartmoor Wild Camping issue to C&A WG: Done

7 Ensure all BCA members, and in particular ACB's are reminded of the changes to BCA insurance in relation to protection of Landowners: On going. Subsequently advised Insurance Manager had circulated all ACBs.

3. Regional C and A funding:

CSCC claim including a request for advance float. JH and VK approved it. Left to WS to push it forward to the Treasurers Group.

4. Conservation of Caves and Mines and their Monitoring:

BM noted a report had been submitted to Scottish Natural Heritage which stated that the SSSI had been partially destroyed. BM has been looking at what the SSSI state as features of interest and how do our monitoring match up with those features. There is a question about if SSSI's actually identify features and how does that align with current monitoring. Another question is who actually in NE and other Statutory bodies goes underground to monitor. The question BM is raising is why do we do it, how do we do it and should we do it more? Each region might be able to maintain a monitoring program. The regions in England are varied as to how the monitoring is supported. One of the points is the need to protect caves and the features that are important in regards to it becoming common knowledge to the general public- does that help or harm? BM has presented a

paper that has been circulated and read, see Annex 2. We don't want monitoring to stop but for the future generations we should be aware of how much we are recording. BM brought up the idea of what role does BCRA play and should there be more clarity about what the features are that need protecting. BM said he will share this with BCRA and write an article for Descent Publication.

5. AOB

5.1 It was noted that the Minutes needed to be distributed and find someone to convene the next meeting.

5.2 Following short discussion, BM agreed to circulate the NCA Handbook and follow up with Andrew Hinde what is current BCA C&A policy.

5.3 Proposed next meeting: 16th of January 2023 at 7 pm by Zoom.

Actions:

- 1 Distribute minutes
- 2 Find Chair for next meeting
- 3 BM circulate NCA Conservation Handbook and clarify what was BCA policy with respect to cave conservation. (See Email 20/11/22)
- 4 Book C&A WG meeting on Zoom for 16 Jan 2023 at 7pm

JP commented that due to the lack of a report, she had included the Minutes of the 10/10/22 C&A meeting.

It was not intended for this to carry on in future.

AH said that the SNH report was unlikely to have happened in England, where we had more descriptions for SSSI's available via Natural England. Cavers were the best custodians for caves.

LW said that she had been asked by CSCC how do they further their request, HJ said he had spoken to Tom last week.

Agenda Item 12: Any Other Business

JW asked at last meeting re what was BCA's strategy.

RM reported that there were a lot of things coming up that need looking into. The Cog group is looking into various things, including a restructuring of BCA, increasing efficiency, need to find out what people think about BCA and where we should be going. RM said it was a big issue and needs to be on a major Agenda item for a future meeting.

AH suggested making a draft of where we wanted to go, with the discussion by email as opposed to Council meeting.

RM asked for suggestions.

JW suggested that aspiring Chairmen should state what their vision was for the following two years.

RV asked what ideas did COG have.

JP said we need to run what we have efficiently before changing it.

AR said he agreed with AH's suggestion, we also cannot be seen to be standing still, but need to improve our efficiency.

GC asked can we advertise for more volunteers.

JW agreed with idea of greater efficiency, better user of technology etc.

Agenda Item 13: Date of next Council meeting

Next meeting 17 Jan 2023