

## **Minutes for the Council Meeting Tuesday 12th December 2023**

The meeting was held via Zoom starting at 7.00 pm

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### **Next Meeting Important Agenda Items**

#### **BCA Council Diary 2023/2024**

AGM 3/6/24

Notification to members no later than midnight 30/1/24

Nominations, proposals etc to the Secretary by midnight 10/3/24

Agenda posted by 22/4/24

Deadline for reports 20/5/24

Deadline for posting reports 27/5/24

AGM 7pm 3/6/24

Voting for 14 days, if starting 4/6/24 then voting closes midnight 18/6/24

Minutes posted by 13/8/24

Next Council meetings

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> Jan

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March

**Council Positions**

<b>Voting Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Initials</b>
<b>BCA Executive</b>		
Chair 21-24 (3 years)	Russell Myers	RM
Secretary 21-24 (3 years)	Allan Richardson	AR
Treasurer		
<b>Group/Club Reps</b>		
Position 1, 22-24 (2 years)	Jenny Potts	JP
Position 2		
<b>Individual Member Reps</b>		
Position 1, 22-24 (2 years)	Andy Eavis	AE
Position 2		
<b>Regional Council Reps</b>		
CCC	Allan Richardson	AR
CNCC	Andrew Hinde	AH
CSCC	Linda Wilson	LW
DCA	Mike Higgins	MH
DCUC	David Jean	DJ
<b>Constituent Body Reps</b>		
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

<b>Non Voting Positions</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Initials</b>
<b>Working Group Convenors</b>		

Training and Equipment	Steve Gray	SG
Conservation and Access	Richard Vooght	RV
Information Technology	Ari Cooper-Davis	ACD
Youth and Development	Jonathan Lester	JL
QMC	George Plant	GP
CoG	Andrew McLeod	AM
Radon	Vacant	
P & I	Vacant	
<b>Additional BCA Appointments</b>		
Insurance Manager	Josh White	JW
Membership Administrator	Katie Eavis	KE
Safeguarding Officer	Chris Boardman	CB
Training Administrator	Mary Wilde	MW
Library Representative	Jenny Potts	JP
Newsletter Editor	Vacant	
UIS Representative	Ged Campion	GC
FSE Representative		
Artificial Cave	Katie Eavis	KE
QMC Representative 1 (observer)	BCA Chair	RM
QMC Representative 2 (observer)	Chris Boardman	CB
Book Keeper	Karen Lydon	KL

### **Present**

Russell Myers, Allan Richardson, Steve Holding, Aidan Kuhlmann (observer)), Jenny Potts, Richard Vooght, David Jean, Zac Woodford (observer), Adrian Turner (Observer YUCPC), Mike Higgins, Chris Boardman, Andy Eavis, Andrew Hinde, Jono Lester, Stephan Natynczuk

### **Agenda item 1: Apologies for absence**

George Plant, Tony Radmall, Linda Wilson, Ged Campion

### **Agenda item 2: Acceptance of the 05th September 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Proposer Jenny Potts

Second Steve Holding

All in favour passed nem con

### **Agenda item 3: Important Agenda items**

None

### **Agenda item 4: Matters arising/Action Plan**

None

### **Agenda item 5: Vacancies**

Treasurer

IT

A Convener is still sought for the P&I working group

One individual representative

One group representative

FSE Representative

The Radon group remains dormant.

### **Agenda item 6: Chair's Report**

My apologies for cancelling the meeting on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December. The previous day, I had visited a very good caving friend, terminally ill in hospital and he died whilst I was there. The aftermath of that rolled over into Tuesday and was not conducive to me chairing the scheduled meeting.

I have received an expression of interest in the Treasurer's position from Aidan Kuhlmann and also Zac Woodford in the vacant Individual Representative position and invited them both to attend the meeting and observe Council undertaking its work.

Additionally, Adrian Turner has been invited to attend with a specific interest in the request from York University CPC for financial help regarding work to their SRT training facility.

R. Myers

Chair

Proposal from Russell to give thanks to paid staff for the work over the year.

Proposed Russell Myers

Seconded Jenny Potts

All in favour passed nem con

### **Agenda item 7: BCA Secretaries Report**

Nothing to report

### **Agenda item 8: BCA Treasurer Report**

Nothing received

### **Book keeping Report**

Nothing received

Andrew Hinde requested that we should receive a Treasurers or Book Keeping report at each meeting.

Membership rates discussion to be moved to next Council Meeting in 2024, this is for the year starting 2025, this will take into account the rise in Insurance costs as well as inflation.

## **Agenda item 9: Insurance Report**

Nothing received

## **Agenda item 10: Membership**

### **BCA Membership Report 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

#### **2023 Club Membership**

**Katie Eavis – club membership administrator**

**2020 vs 2021 vs 2022 vs 2023 Membership levels**

	<b>2020 (up until the 31<sup>st</sup> December)</b>	<b>2021 (up until the 31<sup>st</sup> December)</b>	<b>2022 (up until the 31<sup>th</sup> December)</b>	<b>2023 (up until the 29<sup>th</sup> November)</b>
<b>Groups (including Member Clubs, Associates and Access Controlling Bodies</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>CIMs (including Cavers, Non- Cavers, Students, Under 18s and CDG)</b>	<b>5308</b>	<b>5049</b>	<b>5629</b>	<b>5709</b>

All club cards are posted within 2 weeks of the update being received.

Clubs are generally paying up promptly, with just a few needing chasing to pay. About £115 is still waiting to be paid for 2023 membership, but I confident this will all be paid by the end of 2023.

#### **2024 Renewal time**

Renewal paperwork has been sent to all the access controlling bodies and associate members clubs (19 total). Seven of these have already replied and renewed for 2024.

I am currently in the process of sending the renewal paperwork to the 150 member clubs. This takes time as each club needs to be emailed individually so I can supply them with their 2023 membership lists. By the meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> December these should all have been sent out.

Katie Eavis - BCA Membership Administrator

[membership@british-caving.org.uk](mailto:membership@british-caving.org.uk)

The British Caving Association, The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, Derbyshire, SK17 8RG

#### **E-cards**

BCA council voted to get rid of plastic cards. This will make the BCA greener and also save both money and time in printing and posting cards out to the nearly 7000 members.

This year we will send out plastic cards to cavers who request them, but only whilst stocks last. After this

renewal season I will plan to sell the card printer and return the franking machine which will both positively impact the BCAs finances.

Designing a system that will automatically generate a card for each member and then email it to that specific member from spreadsheet data is well beyond my technological capabilities.

I would be able to generate membership cards but the saving them and emailing them to all members I would have to do manually and this would take hours and hours of time.

However David Gibson has put some thought and effort into an automatic system for sending out e- cards to the individual members. He has offered to tweak his system so that I will be able to upload club members details and the system would automatically generate and send cards to each club member. (in 2023 there are over 5700 of these!)

This will save me a lot of time, the BCA a lot of money on hours they pay me for and also keep our club secretaries happy – as before David suggested using his system I was planning to ask club secretaries to distribute their club e-cards. As you can imagine the clubs with over 300 members weren't delighted with the idea of having to individually email out all of those.

David usually only works on individual membership.

**Please can Council approve David Gibson helping with e-card distribution?**

**Also I would like to thank David for his help. His system will save me from a huge number of hours spent on very repetitive, tedious work.**

Proposed Russell Myers

Second Allan Richardson

All in favour passed nem con.

## **Facebook**

I think it would be good to have a BCA Membership facebook page. In the same way we have a separate library page to the main BCA page. Then I would be able to post regularly about BCA membership and it would be an easier/ informal way to connect with the members in between sending out renewals and news etc.

Would council approve another facebook page specifically for BCA membership?

I appreciate I haven't given much time to consider this and realise it might need to be taken to the next meeting.

Katie Eavis - BCA Membership Administrator

[membership@british-caving.org.uk](mailto:membership@british-caving.org.uk)

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Some discussion, generally in favour, Katie et al to discuss and come back to Council with a proposal.

Andrew Hinde pointed out we need someone in the P&I role.

## **Individual Membership Report David Gibson**

A number of software modules for the DIM system are still in progress, but development has kind-of stalled whilst I wait to see what the future holds. I will send out the DIM renewals shortly - I'm working on the e-cards system at the moment, and would like to get that in place before I send out the renewals. E-cards will be used for DIMs and GRPs, but CIMs are outside my remit, so I won't switch on a CIM e-card system without a specific instruction from Council.

Proposal to switch on the CIM E-card system

Proposed Andrew Hinde

Second Steve Holding.

All in favour passed nem con

## **BCA Just Go**

**4th September 2023**

**Katie Eavis – club membership administrator**

### **Background:**

BCA membership currently consists of around 1000 individual members and over 5600 club members. Club membership is all administrated via a number of spreadsheets. Individual members are tracked via David Gibson's web based system (which is easily transferrable to a spreadsheet). All changes to membership details, for example address or name changes, are done manually via myself or David.

For a couple of years the BCA training side (LCMLA/ CICs) have been on a professional membership platform called 'Just Go'. Via this system members can log on and change their own details, pay membership fees, book on to events etc. The training administrator highly rates Just Go, and even credits Just Go with delaying her retirement by removing the more onerous aspects of the job. She does deal with the odd member who struggles with the new system but the vast majority find it easy and effective to use.

Just Go now has over 2 and half million members and includes groups such as British Canoeing, Swim Ireland, Surf Australia etc.

<https://justgo.com/>

### **Just Go for Membership:**

I have been looking into the possibility of moving BCA membership on to the Just Go platform to join BCA training. This would enable cavers to update their memberships in one place, set up annual direct debits for payment if they wanted and be more in control of their BCA memberships. I know in the past some DIMs have been keen to be able to pay by annual direct debit which this system would provide. As well as dealing with individuals the Just Go system is designed to deal with club membership so we would be able to set up profiles for all our member clubs to track and manage their membership. One of our members, the Speleological Union of Ireland, already uses Just Go. The Just Go system also provides a platform for booking on to events, and a digital wallet which can contain e-cards for membership. It contains an email system which allows bulk emails to be sent to your membership, and creates categories for email – for example you can easily email all male members under 30 if you want!

My current email system only allows me to email 100 people per hour, which means it takes me 2 hours to email all 170 club representatives, and email the 5600 club members is not really possible.

Katie Eavis- Acting BCA Membership Administrator

[membership@british-caving.org.uk](mailto:membership@british-caving.org.uk)

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There is support available via the system if there are problems or queries. This support plus the email facility should help to take some pressure off BCA volunteers, who currently provide IT support and email the whole membership when needed.

Just Go should make the administration of BCA membership easier and more time efficient and also modernise the system so members have more control over their membership.

Obviously this system comes with costs. I have spoken to Phil, the commercial director at Just Go, and got some idea of the systems capabilities as well as the costs involved.

- A one-off implementation fee of £1,500 plus VAT • A quarterly payment of £1,740.

This represents an increase in payment of £1075.38 per quarter, when the amount already paid for the training scheme is removed.

- Transaction fees of 2.9% plus 20p per transaction for payments by UK credit or debit cards.

Please can BCA council consider whether we want to move all BCA membership to Just Go, to join the BCA training scheme? The current way BCA membership is managed does work. We can find all the details we need and can effectively track our membership. But it is quite labour intensive, both for me as a paid membership administrator and for David Gibson who spends a huge amount of volunteer time on membership.

It does involve extra costs – as seen above. However it should improve the service BCA gives its membership, and also future proof BCA membership should the membership administrator change again, especially as happened last time, in a sudden way with no handover!

Phil, from Just Go, has said he is happy to attend a BCA committee meeting remotely if you wanted to talk through the system and its capabilities.

Katie Eavis- Acting BCA Membership Administrator

[membership@british-caving.org.uk](mailto:membership@british-caving.org.uk)

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## **Update on fees for Just Go**

**23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

**Katie Eavis – Membership Administrator**

In preparation for the 5<sup>th</sup> December council meeting I have been discussing with Just Go to see if the fees quoted for BCA membership can be reduced.

Just Go has agreed to lower the quarterly payment amount to £1600 per quarter. This is a reduction of £140 per quarter on their previous quote.



It is worth noting that this isn't all new expense. BCA training currently pay £664.62 per quarter. Membership will be joining training on Just Go and sharing the platform, therefore the BCA will be paying an extra £935.38 per quarter.

Others fee remain as quoted earlier in the year:

- A one-off implementation fee of £1,500 plus VAT
- Transaction fees of 2.9% plus 20p per transaction for payments by UK credit or debit cards.

Transaction fees will also affect BCA, but individual members currently mostly pay via paypal which has a similar fee to the above. I will encourage clubs to keep paying by BACs, not via the Just Go payment system, so the affects of the card fees should be minimal.

**See email below from Just Go:**

*With regards the costs, I'm happy to compromise as follows:*

- *Discount further the quarterly subscription fees to £1,600.00 per quarter – I trust this is sufficient, but to assist further I will delay commencement of these until March 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.*
- *With regards the Implementation Fee, this was always due upfront and wondered if the go- ahead is given on December 5<sup>th</sup>, then I can invoice this in December?*

*I trust this is fair and await your confirmation. Otherwise, very best wishes for your meeting on*

*th December5 .*

*Kind regards, Phil*

Katie Eavis- Acting BCA Membership Administrator

A Query was raised in the meeting as to had we looked into different membership systems eg MemberMojo

Jenny pointed out that QMC already used JustGo, it would be unwise to have two different membership systems within BCA, this was agreed by several others.

QMC who use Justgo spent a lot of time setting up the system.

Proposal

That BCA moves its membership to the JustGo platform

Proposer Andrew Hinde

Second Russell Myers

One abstention Mike Higgins

Rest in favour passed.

## **Agenda item 11: Other Reports**

### **QMC Report. November 2023.**

This quarter we've mostly been busy with the usual problems of 'Out of date' qualifications and resolving them for people – we're a very accommodating National Governing Body (NGB)!

There are a number of repeated issues that come up and it will take a while for these to sort themselves out – but it does seem to be going in the right direction.

Mary is very busy with these at the moment and the others are doing their best to help. We had some interesting discussion recently about different ways of gaining Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to renew our qualifications, which I will discuss with the 'Adventure Sports Group' at the end of the month (this is made up of representatives from Mountain Training, British Canoeing and British Cycling).

There have been a couple of really good documents finished off recently by members of QMC. The Geology doc and the Trainer/Assessor handbook. Both substantial bits of work!

George Plant

### **FSE**

Regarding the FSE there is no change at the moment. A date for next year's General Assembly has not been set yet. The next meeting of the U IS is on 15th December which I will be attending.

## **Agenda Item 12: Any Other Business**

BCA December '23 Council Meeting – Conservation and Access Proposal

As you know, in the August Council Meeting, the CNCC asked to increase the annual expenditure from £750 to £3000. At the meeting, it was agreed to raise it to £1500 as there was insufficient evidence to increase the expenditure to the requested amount. This expenditure is for non-project funding for minor work.

From the last Conservation and Access (C+A) meeting held in September, it was discussed that we would like to raise the Annual Expenditure to £3000. This request is because, as you know, funding a significant part of the BCA allows cavers to access caves and maintain the conservation of gates.

At the moment, there is a requirement to take small non-project work to C&A for approval before starting work, which is making it difficult to achieve a timely response to reports of, for example, broken stiles, fallen trees blocking access, dead sheep in popular entrances, or minor repairs to stock-proof fencing erected to maintain cordial landowner relations.

In some regions, there has been a lot of volunteering work done by highly skilled people to support the quality of caving we are used to. CNCC, for example, has already spent over £1500 this year to maintain cave access and conservation. Recently, due to ash dieback and the notorious battery angle grinders, the work required to preserve caves and mines has increased, and keeping agreements with landowners is the most important thing.

As things are generally getting more expensive, and more and more is being done to keep the caves and mines to the quality we are used to, we (as in the C+A) would like to. The appendix shows the current BCA Funding of Regional Councils before the last meeting.

**Propose:**

**The increase of the annual expenditure for C+A. To rise from £1,500 to £3,000 per Regional Council, to maintain access and conservation to the underground environment.**

Proposer Richard Vooght

Seconder Andrew Hinde

All in favour passed nem con.

*Appendix*

*BCA Funding of Regional Councils*

***Approved at the January 2020 Council meeting.***

*Appendix1. Allowable Funding By Cost Heading***2) C&A**

- Up to £750 per Regional Council per year is paid for C&A according to the accounts.
- C&A expenditure above £750 should be presented as projects (see above).
- Allowable: ( Note the following items are indicative and not exhaustive; ALL reasonable C&A expenses should be allowable): Negotiating access to caves and mines, Gating of entrances (including fencing of open pots), Stabilising entrances, underground conservation. Working with the landowner to maintain access, Payment of “peppercorn” rents for access, Other liaison and public relations work related to maintaining access and promoting conservation. Travel expenses for volunteers at the agreed BCA mileage rate.
- Not Allowable: Digging as part of a new exploration.
- 

**Agenda Item 13: Date of next Council meeting**

AGM date fixed for 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024

Jenny requested that all dates and positions available to be advertised as soon as and as widely as possible.

**AOB**

Dates of next meetings:-

Tuesday 30th January

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March

**Appendix****GRANT REQUEST ON BEHALF OF YORK UNIVERSITY CAVE & POTHOLE CLUB**

The CNCC wishes to apply for a grant of £1835 to enable the immediate restoration of the SRT training facility, based at York University Sports Centre. It is currently out-of-action, awaiting certain improvements and inspection.

The YUCPC had originally hoped to restore the full facility, using both the girders and the walls (at a cost of £5290) but are now looking to reinstate just the girders (at a lower cost of £2235).

This was discussed at length in the CNCC committee meeting on 21 October, where there was strong support for the project.

The CNCC currently have a surplus of approximately £4000, above the normal day-to-day cash flow requirements. However, it was felt by members (and by officers) that it would not be prudent to fund the project in full. Some of this surplus is already earmarked for another “non-BCA fundable” initiative that we are currently launching. Using such a large proportion of our available funds for the benefit of one club would be very unfair on other member clubs.

Nevertheless, as a gesture of support, the committee voted to award a grant of £400, on condition that the BCA were minded to fund the balance required.

The presence of funds in the York University Students Union accounts is currently the limiting factor in APEX commencing the work. The university will not even discuss dates for the work until proof of funds is provided, and that is why we are asking for a clear decision at this meeting.

Any delay is likely to “lose” the current intake of freshers, with ongoing consequences for several years.

We therefore request that the BCA considers making a grant of £1835 in order that the training facility can be re-opened promptly.

If a decision is made at this meeting, the CNCC will immediately transfer £2235 to York University Students Union, before requesting reimbursement of £1835 (being the full amount, less the CNCC grant of £400) from the BCA.

Jill Bolton  
CNCC Secretary  
On behalf of the CNCC

## **BACKGROUND**

York University Cave and Pothole Club was formed in 1981 and is a long-standing member of both the BCA and the CNCC. They have introduced a large number of people to caving every year since then - until now.

YUCPC is very active and well managed, and one of the biggest student clubs. The club prides itself on a high standard of training, made possible by the excellent training facilities at the university sports centre. These facilities were also available for other cavers, not exclusively YUCPC members.

Facilities included 14 ropes hanging from a girder, and another four ropes rigged from a selection of bolts on one wall, and another wall with 40 anchors and 10 ropes, allowing for deviations, re-belays and traverse lines to be rigged. There is also a platform, which assisted with training rescue techniques.

Due to the sports centre's commercial requirements for testing and inspection, the club had to suspend all training at the beginning of 2023, because the anchors have not been pull-tested since installation in 2015.

The sports centre requires that all installed metalwork, ropes and slings are inspected by a recognised third party every year under the "Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998" (LOLER) regulations.

The university and the sports centre have been very helpful in trying to resolve the situation. However, due to existing renovation work, they are unable to assist with funding for this work.

YUCPC worked with the University and the sports centre, along with APEX Access Group to work out a plan for testing and inspection, as well as replacement of the spits and the slings over the girder, for which girder clamps have been suggested as a safer and longer-lasting solution.

However, the university informed YUCPC on 19 October that, following a structural engineering investigation, unfortunately the walls would be "out-of-bounds" for an unspecified period of time.

The club therefore wishes to proceed with restoring just that part of the facility using the girders, and keeping clear of the walls.

APEX have quoted £2235 to supply and install 15 beam clamps, and to inspect existing ropes and metal work. Installation includes the use of an aluminium scaffold tower.

At the meeting Adrian Turner spoke to the proposal:-

About a year ago the Sports Centre started a review of their own policies internally, and found that they had no idea what half the various groups using the facilities actually did, including YUCPC. Also when anchors had been installed, the documentation had been lost by the Sports Centre, so they didn't really know what inspections had been carried out. The Regulations require everything to be tested, some of the Spits do not meet the Regulations, also the slings from the girder are not suitable for fixed installations.

There is a problem with the walls, the Sports Hall has had advice that the walls are not structurally sound enough for being abseiled next to. It is not known at this stage when the structural problems will be sorted out. What YUCPC are looking for is access to the girder so that they can resume training.

The figures for installation quoted are currently correct.

He reported that the university have agreed in writing that they would add future annual testing and inspection to the work that APEX already carries out, so the club does not need to seek longer-term funding.

Allan Richardson asked what would happen when the walls were sorted, would the girder still be in place and usable? Adrian replied that changing the girders would entail knocking the building down, this the University was not prepared to do due to cost. Adrian Turner felt personally that the Sports Centre should be closing the facility on grounds of structural integrity, they have decided its safe to stay open. The work they plan to do is repoint all the brick cladding.

Mike Higgins asked the buildings age, Adrian Turner didn't know.

Jono Lester asked why York Uni was not funding this work? as we are setting a dangerous precedent where the University is being funded by the BCA, this would encourage other Universities to do the same.

Andrew Hinde said that this was an emergency fund request, not an ongoing request.

Aidan Kuhlmann said that in parallel with the climbing clubs, with the BMC refusing to fund facilities, the Universities are being forced to deal with their own issues. Should the BCA fund YUCPC, then there was a risk that all University clubs would request funding for similar facilities, this was unsustainable. He was also concerned about the longevity of the building.

Adrian rTurner replied that the Beam Clamps were reusable and could be moved elsewhere, as and when they are required to do so.

Chris Boardman was not aware of any clubs asking the national body to fund their local activities. He had misgivings about this and felt that the Universities were being very cynical about this. He asked which club if any had been funded in this way in the past?

Jono Lester commented on training being carried out other than in the Sports Centre, using trees, bridges etc. He was concerned that funding this would set a bad precedent for going forward.

Andrew Hinde asked did the BCA fund University Caving, and was the BCA worried about future requests for funding. Jono Lester replied that we were being asked to fund buildings by the University.

Allan Richardson having just done some online research, the building was constructed using Concrete Pillar and Brick Infill construction, on or around 1963, its probably coming to the end of its life, especially if the brick infill was coming out. He said that concerning a building of that age and construction, he would not vote to put any money into it whatsoever.

Proposal to fund £1835 to York University Gym works

Proposer Andrew Hinde

No seconder

Proposal fails

