



Minutes of the Council Meeting Wednesday 29th March 2023

The meeting was held via Zoom starting at 7pm

Table of Contents:

Agenda item	Page	Agenda item summary
1	1	Apologies for absence
2	3	Acceptance of Minutes from 08/02/2023 Council Meeting
3	1	Important Agenda items
4	3	Matters Arising/Action List
5	4	Vacancies
5	4	Chair's Report
6	5	Secretary's Report
7	5	BCA Treasurer Report
8	5	BCA Insurance Managers Report
9	6	Membership
10	7	Other Reports
11	9	AOB
12	9	Date of Next Meeting
Appendices		

Next Meeting Important Agenda Items

BCA Council Diary 2023	
	Date

AGM Agenda posted no later than:	30 th April 2023
Council	Tuesday 9 th May 2023
AGM	Sunday 11 th June 2023 at 1030
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	SG
Conservation and Access	Richard Vooght	RV
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	Josh White	JW
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 Champion	GC
Artificial Cave	Katie Eavis	KE
QMC Representative 1 (observer)	BCA Chair	RM
QMC Representative 2 (observer)	Chris Boardman	CB

Present

RM, AR, LW, JG, TR, HJ, RV, GC, AH, JP, DJ, AM, JW.

Agenda item 1: Apologies for absence

Andy Eavis, Ari Cooper-Davis, Mike Higgins, George Plant, Chris Boardman, Stephan Natynczuk, Steve Holding.

Agenda item 2: Acceptance of the 8th February 2023 Meeting Minutes

Proposer LW

Second TR

Accepted Nem Con

Agenda item 4: Matters arising/Action Plan

Issue	Who	By when	Signed off

Agenda item 5: Vacancies

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

GC reported that Imogen Campion would hopefully be back to help in May.

RM noted comments on UK Caving about the lack of a P&I officer.

The Radon group remains dormant.

Agenda item 6: Chair's Report

Nothing to report.

Agenda item 7: BCA Secretaries Report

I received an email from a Council member for the council which was sent from a work address, this I copied out to the rest of the Council in good faith. The sender to whom I have since apologised, pointed out that I had advertised their work email, I agree that at the bottom of the email which nobody reads, is a request that it is not copied on.

This is a known problem, witness the number of Politicians and Government employees etc who have made this mistake.

The advice is simple, mistakes happen, it is not advisable to send private emails from a work address.

No questions or comments.

Agenda item 8: BCA Treasurer Report

BCA Treasurer Report to BCA Council March 2023

Current bank balances: as at 20/3/2023 was £249,000. Of which £88,000 is in medium term interest bearing accounts and £77,000 is in short term deposit accounts.

Bank accounts:

We now have a deposit account with HSBC for short term deposits. The rate is low but better than nothing and transfer to and from current account is easy. We received £70 interest in the first 2 months of 2023.

Unusual spend since last Council:

BCRA 1st quarter donation £3,000. Y&S expenses £600, Descent adverts for the year £2,520.

BCA Financial year end

Elsewhere I have published the accounts for year ending 31st December 2022. These have been signed by the BCA Chair and the Independent reviewer, so I present them for approval. One approved I will do the tax return for the same period, there is no tax due.

Extract from the notes to the accounts:

2022 accounts for the British Caving Association show the following:
Income for the year has increased due to the agreed annual fee increase with effect from January 1st 2022
Interest is slightly higher as the base rate has increased in 2022. This will improve further in 2023.
The QMC (training) result was a good surplus with increased activity in 2022. Increased costs were more than offset by extra income. The outlook for 2023 looks favourable too.
Other points to note :
In last year's accounts the financial result of the CRoW case was unknown and so we accrued the worst case scenario. Thankfully that did not occur so there is a write back in 2022.
Y&D activity was excellent in the year with several kit stores being funded.
Support for the regions was higher than last year mainly due to increased C&A activity especially in the Southern regions and training activity elsewhere.
BCA Council has approved an overhaul of the rope testing rig and these costs have been accrued
A donation of £1,500 was made to BCRC in the year as well as the usual donations to BCRA and Ghar Parau Foundation.
These have led to BCA reporting a small surplus of £14k and an increase in net assets to £169k.

Approval of 2022 Accounts

Prop JW

Second TR

Accepted Nem Con

BCA notes its thanks to the Independent Reviewer of the Accounts.

BCA Budget 2023

I have prepared this as usual and is a separate paper to Council. If all my assumptions are correct it shows a deficit of around £9,000 for the year. We are aware of the insurance increase in cost for the next 2 years and inflation will affect all aspects of BCA expenses. If a membership fee increase is not considered then I would expect the 2024 deficit to be above £15,000, all else being equal.

HJJ March 2023.

See separate email from Howard which I have copied to Council with the Budget 2023 and signed accounts for Council approval.

HJ pointed out that at some time in the future Council needs to decide whether to carry on reducing its assets, or propose a fee increase.

JW asked what was a reasonable amount for BCA to hold in the accounts. HJ replied that it was not advisable to fall below £100,000 as our main creditor the Insurance Company would be unhappy with this, as well as our staff. HJ pointed out that if nothing changes we are 4 years away from that situation.

AH explained that CNCC has a high level of turnover due to currently high levels of Training. Whilst this will be reimbursed by BCA at the end of the year, he was wondering if there was some facility to assist in this before the end of the year, as they are only able to claim in arrears. HJ reported that currently there is a mechanism for a region to get an unsecured loan, that is if the Regional Council doesn't have the money in the bank, if a Regional Council do have the balance available in their reserves, they should pay out of their own funds initially.

HJ will look at some wording to bring to the next BCA Council meeting, re funding for councils that have insufficient funds to meet approved expenditure, he will discuss with AH.

AH felt that training would plateau in time, as people work through the training process which had been slowed down due to the pandemic.

JW supported the level and quality of training being delivered by CNCC.

RM thought that it was not a good time to consider a subs rise at present due to the cost of living, this may change as the year progresses. Think about it again before the AGM.

Agenda Item 9: BCA Insurance Manager's report

I've been asked by Howden to provide the following information to our members. This isn't a change to process, but serves as a reminder of our responsibilities under this policy.

As part of the liability insurance you avail of through your membership with British Caving, the insurance policy requires that all incidents which could give rise to a claim are notified to British Caving and our insurance brokers Howden as soon as you are aware.

Failure to do so may affect any incident which later becomes a claim against you or your club.

Howden have kindly put together some guidance for you to use as to what matters should be reported.

Josh White
BCA Insurance Manager
Insurance@british-caving.org.uk

The guidance referred to above is copied below.

Liability Claims Notification Requirements

Your contract of insurance does have certain conditions imposed, which may be summarised as follows:

- You are required to give insurers immediate written notice with full particulars of any claims or circumstances which may give rise to a claim, regardless of any excess that you have to bear under your policy cover, or whether you think that you may be legally liable
- Every letter, claim, writ, summons and process in connection with such circumstances must be forwarded to Howden immediately on receipt
- Written notice must be given to insurers immediately you have knowledge of any prosecution, inquest or inquiry in connection with any circumstances, which may give rise to liability under the policy

Therefore it is important that:

- An investigation of every incident should be carried out whilst those involved, including witnesses, still have a clear idea of the circumstances, and a written report should be produced
- Every incident, particularly those involving personal injury, should be reported to us immediately it happens and we will advise you what to do next. Please ensure procedures are in place for all documentation to reach us as quickly as possible

In order to achieve this, we would ask that you notify us immediately of any incident that involves:

- A fatal accident
- An injury involving either referral to or actual hospital treatment
- Any allegations of libel/slander

- Any allegations of professional negligence ie arising out of tuition, coaching or advice given
- Any circumstance that has triggered an investigation under your safeguarding policy
- Any circumstance involving damage to third party property

An injury is defined as:

- Any head injury that requires medical treatment (doctor or hospital)
- Any fracture other than to fingers, thumbs or toes
- Any amputation, dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine
- Loss of sight (whether temporary or permanent)
- Any injury resulting from electrical shock or burn, leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
- Any other injury leading to hypothermia, heat induced illness or to unconsciousness which requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
- Loss of consciousness caused by asphyxia or by exposure to a harmful substance or biological agent

Please note the above list is not exhaustive and if you are unsure as to whether an incident should be reported, then please do not hesitate to contact Howden claims department for further advice.

We would remind you that in NO circumstances should you admit liability or agree to pay for any damage caused as this may prejudice the position of insurers and COULD result in the withdrawal of any indemnity.

Finally, please note that this is a liability policy where insurers decide if negligence attaches to you. Therefore any payments you make to third parties will not necessarily be reimbursed.

Incident Recording Guidelines

- We would recommend that a designated person within your organisation is made responsible to record any reportable accident. Records must be kept for at least 6 years (and significantly longer where the incident involves a minor). Names and addresses of any possible witnesses should also be recorded
- Businesses are legally obliged to have an accident book which is compliant with data protection legislation. The book is available from HSE Books

- The accident book must contain the following information relating to all reportable accidents or dangerous occurrences:
 - - Date and time of accident
 - - As regards a person at work - full name; occupation; nature of injury; age
 - - As regards a person not at work - full name; status (eg customer); nature of injury; age
 - - Place where accident occurred
 - - A brief description of the circumstances
 - - Method by which the event was reported

Reporting Incidents to Health & Safety Executive

You may also have obligations under the RIDDOR regulations to report incidents to the HSE. For further information visit the HSE website.

Potential Abuse Claims

Howden Sport, Recreation and Equine have produced specific guidance regarding the notification of circumstances of abuse and poor practice, to help you comply with insurer's terms and conditions.

Full details of this guidance can be found at:

<http://www.howden-sites.co.uk/uploads/documents/docs//Safeguarding-in-Sport-HUG-BJLLP.pdf>

If you have any queries about this or notification of circumstances and claims in general, please speak to your usual contact.

LW said that it would be good to put the above information out to the regions.

HJ suggested that the regions need to discuss it amongst themselves.

AH suggested that most potential claims will come via digging and club activities. Can we inform the clubs direct?

HJ suggested that JW contacts the various clubs to remind them of the above notes. JW said he will do this.

RM suggested it could go out on the Regional Council websites.

Agenda Item 10: Membership Report

24th March 2023

BCA Club membership

Katie Eavis – club membership administrator

2023 Club Membership

2020 vs 2021 vs 2022 vs 2023 Membership levels

	2020 (up until the 31 st December)	2021 (up until the 31 st December)	2022 (up until the 31 th December)	2023 (up until the 24 th March)
Groups (including Member Clubs, Associates and Access Controlling Bodies)	166	162	169	161
CIMs (including Cavers, Non-Cavers, Students, Under 18s and CDG)	5308	5049	5629	5150

Two clubs that have not been BCA members since 2020 have rejoined the BCA this year. Covid stopped their caving for a while but interest has picked up so they have returned to BCA.

One new club has joined BCA this year.

There are 11 clubs who were members in 2022 that have yet to re-join BCA. Three of these have been in touch and are intending to join soon. Two clubs have let me know they will not be re-joining this year. In one case they haven't managed to get going against since covid. The other have said they are retiring due to age! A third club has let me know they are still deciding whether to join for 2023 as they haven't done much caving for a long time.

I haven't had any response from the remaining five clubs. I will send them all another reminder in the next few weeks.

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.

DIM membership report

David Gibson

David reports current DIM membership number is 813

There are 342 reported as overdue (but some of these may have joined via clubs this year and DIM turnover is always quite high).

All overdue DIM members have received two reminders about their renewal being due. David does not plan to send a third reminder unless specifically requested by BCA, so as not to pester people who may not wish to re-join, or have joined through a club etc.....

DIM applications are processed and cards posted within 2 weeks.

No questions

RM was happy with how the membership numbers were going.

Agenda Item 11: Other Reports

FSE delegate report

The FSE has 30 member 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.**

The FSE EuroSpeleo Forum was held in Burgos Spain in September and despite concerns about its proximity on the calendar to the ICS in France, the Spanish event was extremely well organised and attended by Speleo's from many nationalities. The legacy of the International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) is showing positive signs of continuing for some years to come. Over 1,600 events from the IYCK have so far been recorded, including, online webinars, photo exhibitions, videos and competitions with a significant number hosted in Europe.

The work of the bureau continues to be conducted by exchange of emails, regular update meetings held online which since November have included commission leads and the newsletter editor.

EuroSpeleo Projects (ESPs) sponsoring and supporting caving expeditions, events, and projects from member countries. As countries slowly recover from the effects of the pandemic a healthy number of applications are filtering through for projects. In addition to this considerable work continues to be invested in maintaining the system of equipment sponsorship of European projects. There have been no applications from the UK during this period.

The next GAM of the FSE will be held in Breitscheid, Germany 20th May 2023.

Ged Campion.

BCA delegate to FSE

GC was keen to encourage UK Cavers to apply for grants from the FSE and UIS.

UIS Report

Conservation and Access Working Group

Next meeting will be 25th or 27th April.

Next agreed project is in Devon, one of the gates has been put in

The Swildons Barn repair works are next, LW thought they were scheduled for June 2023.

CROW

Youth and Development

Southern CHECC at SWCC two weeks ago went well.

Northern CHECC is happening this weekend at Bull Pot Farm.

GC reported that the European Federation is running a European wide youth caving camp, this is in the works, probably 2024. JW said that Dave Botch and Rob Watson are involved, if they need any external support they will contact him.

Agenda Item 12: Any Other Business

1) Proposal from Josh White.

Please see below a proposal for council funding from the Bendrigg Trust.

40% of disabled children think ‘their impairment, health condition, illness or disability’ stops them from being active. Even from a young age, children see their disability as the number one barrier preventing them from accessing the outdoors with all the health benefits, both physical and mental, that it brings.

The Bendrigg Trust is one the UK’s leading provider of outdoor activities for people with disabilities. Over the last 45 years Bendrigg has provided access to the outdoors for over 87,000 disabled and disadvantaged people in the UK. Through this 45 years they have built up a vast knowledge bank, which they look to pass on through a training service.

The BCA’s own equality and diversity states: *The BCA aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout, in the recruitment, training and development of members, and to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination.* Clearly the BCA recognises this barrier to entry, the importance of the outdoors, and their role as a national association.

In September 2023, Bendrigg will be running an event, the UK’s first Caving Festival aimed at opening up the underground for those with disabilities. This two pronged event will provide opportunities for people with disabilities to experience underground places they’d not previously been able to, but will also offer training to recreational cavers to enable club cavers to feel confident if approached by someone with a disability to welcome them into the club and onto events. The training will be run by Bendrigg’s disability awareness advisor, Kate McCallum and Sam Litten, the activities manager and CIC, but also a CNCC Training officer.

Being the first event of this kind getting every possible bit of support is important. Bendrigg over recent years has run a Climbing Festival that has been generously supported by the BMC, and with this event we are approaching the BCA for some financial support.

The support will go towards keeping costs as low as possible for participants to reduce the cost being a barrier to participation – the third highest barrier noted by those with disabilities at 27% - but also to ensure that the cost of training for cavers can be kept as low as possible to encourage as many to participate as possible.

We’ve estimated that to provide training for 10 cavers and caving for 15 participants we would require funding of £2,500, this covers subsidising costs for the cavers training and participants, as well as providing a souvenir of their trip and costing for additional staff to ensure the weekend runs as successfully as possible.

I propose that BCA provide funding of £2,500 towards this event. Bendrigg will commit to providing updates about the event and where the funding goes to in a timely manner through Josh White, BCA Youth & Development Representative.

I will be attending the next council meeting to field questions, and will declare my conflict of interest. If there is an issue with this conflict, I am happy to abstain from the vote.

Kind regards,
Josh

That BCA accepts the proposal by the Bendrigg Trust. Also that any remaining funds need to be reported to BCA.

Proposer TR

Secunder AR

One abstention

Rest in favour Proposal Passed.

2)Artificial cave

This was built over a decade ago as a tool to encourage new cavers. It is loaned out to clubs free of charge who tow it to their venue and then return it after use. It has been kept in Derbyshire and Katie Eavis administrates the loans and arranged any repairs as and when needed. The Scouts are frequent users. Its used around 20 times per annum

The farmer who has stored it for free has decided he no longer wants the cave on his land and Katie has looked around for alternatives. We have decided to place it at a caravan storage place close to where Katie lives which is important. They are happy with the coming and going of the cave and its trailer. There is a cost associated with this new arrangement and so there will now be a small charge of £25 per hire going forward to cover the cost of storage

TR asked how much usage the artificial Cave got, HJ thought it was about 20 to 25 times per year.

Howard Jones

Proposal that hirers pay £25 per use

Proposer HJ

Secunder JW

Proposal Passed Nem Con

3) AH reported that the funding request for the digitization of the Horner Photographic collection was still being developed. Ongoing.

Agenda Item 13: Date of next Council meeting

Next meeting Tues 9th May 2023 at 1900 (tbc)