



## **Minutes of the Council Meeting Tuesday 27th June 2023**

The meeting was held via Zoom starting at 7pm

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### Next Meeting Important Agenda Items

BCA Council Diary 2023	
	Date
Council	Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 Set Council dates for remainder of 2023.

### Council Positions

Voting Position	Name	Initials
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<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		JW
Position 2, 22-24 (2 years)	Jenny Potts	JP
<b>Individual Member Reps</b>		
Position 1		
Position 2, 22-24 (2 years)	Andy Eavis	AE
<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
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Non Voting Positions	Name	Initials
<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		
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

## **Present**

Russell Myers, Allan Richardson, Andy Eavis, Steve Holding, Linda Wilson, John Gunn, Ged Campion, Stephan Natynczuk, George Plant, Mike Higgins, Andrew Hinde, Richard Vooght, Jenny Potts.

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

Ari Cooper-Davis, Tony Radmall, Chris Boardman

## **Agenda item 2: Acceptance of the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Proposer Jenny Potts

Second Mike Higgins

John Gunn & Stephan Natynczuk abstained, rest in favour, minutes carried

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

None

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

a)Howard Jones is still in the background acting as a mentor to Karen Lydon re the book keeping and available for financial advice.

Treasurers email address, any queries will still go to Howard Jones, need to clarify with Howard.

Day to day finances are covered by Karen Lydon.

The Chair organised an email vote re the creation of a book keepers role.

Dear Council Member,

Attached is a record of the voting regarding the establishment of a book keeper. Of the potential 18 votes, 11 were returned, all in favour of the proposal with none against. There were 7 votes not returned and no further comments were received about the proposal.

The result is the proposal for a book keeper is carried.

Kind Regards

Russell Myers

Chair

BCA

## Voting result from the email vote 28/5 – 4/6 to adopt a paid book keeper.

<b>Voting Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Vote</b>
<b>BCA Executive</b>		
Chair 21-24 (3 years)	Russell Myers	Casting vote
Secretary 21-24 (3 years)	Allan Richardson	Yes
Treasurer 20-23 (3years)	Howard Jones	Abstained
<b>Group/Club Reps</b>		
Position 1, 21-23 (2 years)	Josh White	Yes
Position 2, 22-24 (2 years)	Jenny Potts	Not returned
<b>Individual Member Reps</b>		
Position 1, 21-24 (2 years)	Nigel Atkins	Not returned
Position 2, 22-24 (2 years)	Andy Eavis	Not returned
<b>Regional Council Reps</b>		
CCC		Not returned
CNCC	Andrew Hinde	Yes
CSCC	Linda Wilson	Yes
DCA	Mike Higgins	Yes
DCUC	David Jean	Yes
<b>Constituent Body Reps</b>		
William Pengelly CST	Richard Vooght	Yes
Assoc. Cave Instructors	Stephan Natynczuk	Yes
National Caving Scout Active Support Unit	Tony Radmall	Yes
BCRA	John Gunn	Yes
NAMHO	Steve Holding	Yes

CHECC	Jennifer Ryder	Not returned
CDG	Claire Cohen	Not returned
BCRC	Emma Porter	Not returned

b)Emailing all the members, managed to get the emails out in the end, out of 6,500 members there were no responses. Comments that people are simply not volunteering generally.

There was a feeling that not everyone had received the email/gone to spam box, the Chair to check with Ari.

Jenny Potts pointed out that we are a Federation, the Regional Councils have less of a problem getting volunteers.

Issue	Who	By when	Signed off
None			

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

Treasurer

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

One individual representative

One group representative

The Radon group remains dormant.

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

Our efforts to raise awareness about the number of vacancies within BCA through directly emailing members and using the media available to us, as well as opening the floor at the AGM for nominations, for volunteers from the caving community to step forward and help run the organisation, has failed rather miserably but not totally. One ray of hope has come forward to take on the Youth and Development position which we should endorse at this Council meeting. It seems very apt that our current dilemma may well turn round from the green shoots of youth. I very much hope so.

Where do we go from here? – I'm open to suggestions. Fortunately, we put a plan in place for the book keeping work which is now operational, but we need still need a Treasurer to maintain an oversight of that function as well as act in a strategic role and take a place on the Executive Committee. Council can co-opt someone to that position and the Secretary and I are currently

working to find someone to fill that vacancy on a contingency basis, for Council to consider by the time of the meeting.

In the notification which was circulated to the membership, I pointed out that if volunteers did not come forward, we could well be looking at creating paid positions to fulfil those roles. I am open to suggestions on this too.

I feel we are at a turning point where the whole structure of BCA needs to be reconsidered along with the way in which we do things – something for the Constitution and Operations Group (COG) to take on board although I'm open to ideas and suggestions from anyone else on this along with those identified above.

Russell Myers

Chair

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

Nothing to report.

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

No report

### **Book keeping Report**

No report.

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

No report

### **Agenda item 10: Membership**

No report

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

#### **IT Report**

Howard, David Gibson, and I are working to replace the PayPal account used by the BCA to one that is more flexible to changes in staff (at the moment it's tied to an individual). This is being tested now and should be implemented shortly. Mostly work for Howard and David, but probably falls under IT for reporting to Council.

Ari Cooper Davis.

### **Conservation Report**

As I have only become the Conservation and Access convener since January this year, this report will be short.

Since January, we have had two meetings and have given funding for several projects. These projects were the updating and additional gates to Great Rock Mine in Devon, the funding for the



repair of the changing barn at Swildon's Hole on Mendip and the funding to purchase the land around the entrance of Wet Sink.

On top of the funding requests, there has been a significant issue in multiple regions from Ash Die Back. This has caused problems with access to several caves. However, after many long days of negotiations and graft, these issues have been solved with remaining access. Please contact your regional Access and Conservation for more details about this.

Our next meeting will be in September.

Richard Vooght

## **QMC Report**

The QMC seems to be quite a busy little place at the moment, we are still finding idiosyncrasies in the JustGo membership platform, but Mary Wilde and Gethin Thomas are working to make this run even more smoothly.

Running a National Governing Body Award is not straightforward and it's difficult to please everyone, but I think we are getting there; and we continue to listen to the membership and make amendments where we can. We are *still* finding a few people who are not up to date since Covid, but the majority are now fully on board with the 'new' system.

Potential Cave Leaders continue to register their interest and there seems to be lots of work out there for them. It's great that lots of young people will have an introduction to caving with a safe pair of hands. I know how much work there is out there because it's nearly impossible to arrange meetings between us all!

The BCA offers great support to the QMC through the Treasurer role, IT support and overview, amongst other things. We are most appreciative of this but we are also happy that we no longer appear to need any financial support!

George Plant

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

### **1) Working groups**

a) Council to agree which working groups will continue to operate and appoint their conveners.

Youth and Development

Training and Equipment

Conservation and Access

QMC

CRoW

Information and Technology

Constitution and Operations

## Library Steering Group

Council proposes to accept the above groups for the next year

Proposer Linda Wilson

Seconder Steve Holding

All in favour passed nem con.

## Individual positions

Insurance Manager

Safeguarding Officer

Library Representative

UIS Representative

FSE Representative

QMC representatives, 2 from Council

Council proposes to accept the above positions for the next year.

Proposer Linda Wilson

Seconder Mike Higgins

All in favour passed nem con.

Newsletter editor, the suggestion is to roll the post into P&I. No objections to the suggestion.  
Russell Myers to talk to Imogen Campion who is currently providing some support for publicity.

b) Youth and Development, welcome to Jonathan Lester who has volunteered to take on the role.

He has been working with Josh White in the Youth and Development role.

Council proposes to co-opt Jonathan Lester for the role.

Proposer Jenny Potts

Seconder Richard Vooght

All in favour passed nem con

c) Publicity is important, there is a need to create a Communications Working Group. This is primarily to assemble information to send to Descent.

The proposal is to set up a Communications Working Group, actively involving Imogen Campion with input from Exec etc. Email vote after the meeting.

## **2) BCA Plastic Card Replacement**

I propose a motion that from 2024, BCA fully investigates doing away with the use of plastic membership cards and brings a detailed proposal for a change to a system of evidencing membership by an emailed PDF to Council for a decision at the next meeting.

Linda Wilson CSCC Representative

Rationale

There is a feeling that most cards are simply a waste of plastic. Most members rarely need to show them. My experience in UBSS is the same.

The outcome of discussions with the IT WG Convenor Ari Cooper Davis and the Membership Administrator Katie Eavis indicates there doesn't seem to be any barrier to a change being made for next year. Katie is able to deal with membership certificates by means of a mail merge to PDF rather than to the card printer. The savings to BCA would be as follows:

£1000 on postage of membership cards £1385 on plastic cards and ink for the card printer and £75 per year on envelopes and packaging.

Total £2460

Katie also said that there are other costs which could be factored in:

1. BCA pays to have a franking machine. Without plastic cards we wouldn't need a franking machine, but would then spend some money on stamps.
2. In addition to the direct savings, there's the environmental benefit of cutting down on single use plastics.

In terms of distribution of the replacements, Katie said she would be able to email them direct in cases where clubs pass membership contact details to her. In other cases, she could send them direct to the club contact.

Members could then print their own evidence of membership if needed or save as a pdf to their phones.

If any people want to cling to plastic cards, as I imagine BCA still has some stock of plastic, for a transitional period, some cards could be printed and posted on request by individuals if needed.

## **Update after last Council meeting**

Currently awaiting Steve Holdings consultation with NAMHO.

Steve reported that there were no concerns from NAMHO re the cards, but that people must be able to download a pdf.

Proposal as originally proposed by Linda Wilson

Seconder Mike Higgins

All in favour passed nem con.

### **3) Application for BCA / BCRA funding for digitisation of Horner Collection.**

The Horner Photographic Collection of Settle includes some of the earliest known caving photographs. The ownership of the collection is now with the Museum of North Craven Life at the Folly in Settle. They would like to digitise the collection to make it more widely available. They have asked if the BCA/ BCRA could co fund some of the cost of digitisation of the caving photos. Some of these photos of GG and Alum Pot date to no later than 1893. (pre Martel) There are a few prints on show at the Folly. The quality of the negatives must be incredible as the prints look remarkable.

The North Craven Heritage Trust has received a Reimagine grant from the [Art Fund](#) to set up the [Through A New Lens project](#) to research, describe, digitise and display the Horner Collection in a permanent exhibition at The Folly. This involves a dedicated team of volunteers working alongside a consultant photographic historian to catalogue the photographs, scan them, and identify any conservation issues. Ultimately, the Trust plans to create an online catalogue of every photograph in the collection for use by researchers, family historians and members of the public alike.

#### [The Horner Collection - The Folly](#)

The collection has turned up around 75 images relating to caving so far and many are of national importance. These include images of GG, Alum Pot and the original excavations of Victoria Cave. Many more are emerging as cataloguing progresses.

#### Update after last Council meeting

The total amount requested is £1500, split equally between BCA and BCRA.

Jenny reported that the British Caving Library is making a £250 donation to the BCRA donation, this will enable online access by the Library to High Resolution downloads.

Andrew Hinde proposed that BCA funds £750 to the project, subject to details.

Proposer Andrew Hinde

Seconder Jenny Potts

All in favour passed nem con

### **4) Templates on the website for Agendas, Reports etc**

This happened once last year, they then disappeared.

Everyone in favour, Secretary to talk to Ari Cooper Davis as to how it could be done.

## 5) **AGM 2024**

Ask the CoG to take note of the comments during the AGM and suggest a better way forward for next year.

Also to look into taking a proposal to AGM 2024 to move the date of the AGM.

Jenny Potts said that the constitution gave the month (June) or as soon as reasonable thereafter, but not the time or day.

Jenny Potts proposed a week day evening, everyone seemed happy with that.

Exec to look into a suitable mid-week date in June. At the same time announce when nominations and proposals are to be sent in.

To change the month will need a constitutional amendment at next year's AGM.

## 6) **CRow**

Andrew Hinde pointed out that BCA still carries a mandate from the membership to work for access to caves under CRow. We are now approaching the end of a political cycle, so we need some strategy as to how to go about this. There are three ways we can go about this, we can continue with the current CRow working group, send the CRow strategy and activity back to the C&A group, or employ a paid lobbyist. Andrew Hinde would like BCA to come up with a strategy as to how we can make the most of this opportunity.

Jenny Potts pointed out we have an accredited parliamentary lobbyist in David Rose. We also now know that we will get nowhere in Wales due to the attitude of the officials in Wales. She also pointed out that there is now a greater push for access to the countryside from many quarters, we need to get involved with other organisations.

Andrew felt that it was important to work out which group was going to be leading on this, this needs to be sorted out. The C&A Convener, Richard Vooght will ask the C&A group whether anyone is interested in taking this on. The Chair said we need to get this sorted out by the next meeting, he will take this on.

## 7) **Oxford University SRT Facility**

OUCC asking whether BCA can endorse the project as this would boost the proposal, it might also help with questions re Insurance and Public Liability.

The Information was sent round Council during the meeting, it will need an email response.

## 8) **N. Ireland and SUI**

The Chair informed the BCA over an issue in N. Ireland, involving a rival organisation purporting to be the official body for caving in N. Ireland, this position is currently covered by SUI. A meeting was held with the SUI who are looking into their constitution as to their position. BCA are looking into how we can support SUI. It is an evolving situation. People need to be aware of the position and be careful about being drawn into this. Ged Champion pointed out that the SUI was having its annual meeting in N. Ireland this year.

The Chair was putting together a statement and proposal from BCA on the matter.

9) Andy Eavis asked what was happening about Hidden Earth, Jenny Potts hoped that something might be announced at the next BCRA meeting on Sunday. To date, nothing has been confirmed about the event.

Post meeting, Hidden Earth was announced to be on the 15/17<sup>th</sup> September, at Gordano School, Portishead, nr Bristol.

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

Linda Wilson proposed the 5<sup>th</sup> September

Seconded Jenny Potts

Passed

Next meeting Tues 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 1900

Linda Wilson suggested that the Exec gets together and sorts out the future dates.