



## Minutes for Council Meeting

Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July at 7pm

Held via Zoom

<b>Agenda Item No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item Name</b>
1	Apologies for Absence
2	Persons present
3	Current Composition of the BCA Council
4	Previous Meeting Attendance & Report Submissions
5	Acceptance of previous meeting's minutes
6	Officer Reports
7	Matters arising from the previous Council Meeting
8	Items for Discussion
9	Any Other Business
10	Details of the Next Meeting

### **1.0 Apologies for Absence**

Zach Woodford, John Gunn, Andy Eavis, Steve Holding

### **2.0 Persons present**

Aidan Kuhlmann, Rostam Namaghi, Jenny Potts, Chris Bolton, Linda Wilson, Tony Radmall, Victoria Kocher, Richard Vooght, David Jean, Isaac Neale, Chris Boardman, Todd Rye, Stephan Natynczuk. Gethin Thomas, Joshitha Shivkumar, Peter Jackson (attending in Steve Holding's place)

*Minutes compiled by Katie Eavis (not present at the meeting) from the Zoom recording and reviewed by Aidan Kuhlmann.*

No quorate number required.

### 3.0 Current Composition of the BCA Council

	Position	Name	Initials	Vote
<b>BCA Executive</b>	Chair (2024-27)	Rostam Namaghi	RN	N
	Treasurer (2024-27)	Chris Bolton	CJB	Y
	Secretary (2024-27)	Aidan Kuhlmann	AK	Y
<b>Individual Members Representatives</b>	Position 1 (2023-2025)	<i>Vacant</i>		
	Position 2 (2024-2026)	Andy Eavis	AE	Y
<b>Group Member Representatives</b>	Position 1 (2023-2025)	<i>Vacant</i>		
	Position 2 (2024-2026)	Jenny Potts	JP	Y
<b>Regional Council Representatives</b>	CNCC	Todd Rye	TRY	Y
	CSCC	Linda Wilson	LJW	Y
	DCA	Mike Higgins	MH	Y
	DCUC	David Jean	DJ	Y
	Ogofa Cymru / Caving Wales	Allan Richardson	AR	Y
<b>Constituent Body Representatives</b>	Assoc. Caving Instructors	Stephan Natynczuk	SN	Y
	BCRA	John Gunn	JG	Y
	BCRC	Emma Porter	EP	Y
	CDG	Claire Cohen	CC	Y
	CHECC	Tom Phillips	TP	Y
	NAMHO	Steve Holding	SH	Y
	National Caving Scout Active Support Unit	Tony Radmall	TR	Y
	William Pengelly CST	Richard Vooght	RV	Y
<b>Working Group Convenors</b>	Conservation & Access Committee	Victoria Kocher	VK	N
	Anchor	<i>Vacant</i>		
	National Access	<i>Vacant</i>		N
	Publications & Information	Zac Woodford	ZW	N
	Qualification Management Committee	George Plant	GP	N
	Radon	<i>Dormant</i>		N
	Training & Equipment	<i>Vacant</i>		N
	Youth & Development	Isaac Neale	IN	N
<b>Other Positions</b>	BCL Representative	Jenny Potts	JP	N
	FSE Rep	Allan Richardson	AR	N
	Insurance	<i>Vacant</i>		N
	Newsletter Editor	<i>Vacant</i>		N
	Safeguarding Officer	Chris Boardman	CBD	N
	UIS Rep	John Gunn	JG	N
<b>BCA Staff</b>	Artificial Cave	Katie Eavis	KE	N
	Bookkeeper	Karen Lydon	KL	N
	Membership Admin	Katie Eavis	KE	N
	Training Admin	Mary Wilde	MW	N

#### 4.0 Previous Meeting Attendance & Report Submissions

	Position	Initials	22/07	Report?	16/09	Report?	25/11	Report?	20/01	Report?
<b>BCA Executive</b>	Chair	RN	Y	Y						
	Treasurer	CJB	Y	Y						
	Secretary	AK	Y	Y						
<b>Members Representatives</b>	Position 1		N/A	N/A						
	Position 2	AE	N	N/A						
<b>Group Member Representatives</b>	Position 1		N/A	N/A						
	Position 2	JP	Y	N/A						
<b>Regional Council Representatives</b> N.B: Reports are optional	Ogofa Cymru	AR	N	Y						
	CNCC	TRY	Y	Y						
	CSCC	LJW	Y	Y						
	DCA	MH	Y	Y						
	DCUC	DJ	Y	N						
<b>Constituent Body Representatives</b> N.B: Reports are optional	ACI	SN	Y	N						
	BCRA	JG	N	N						
	BCRC	EP	N	N						
	CDG	CC	N	N						
	CHECC	TP	N	N						
	NAMHO	SH/PJ	Y	N						
	NCSASU	TR	Y	N						
	WP CST	RV	Y	N						
<b>Working Group Convenors</b>  (Dormant)	Anchor	PK	N/A	N/A						
	C&A	VK	Y	Y						
	Finance	CJB	Y	N/A						
	Incorporation	CJB	N/A	N/A						
	National Access		N/A	N/A						
	P&I	ZW	N	Y						
	QMC	GP	Y	N						
	Radon		N/A	N/A						
	T&E		N/A	N/A						
	Y&D	IN	Y	Y						
<b>Other Positions</b>			Y	Y						
	BCL Rep.	JP								
	FSE Rep	TP	N	Y						
	Insurance		N/A	N/A						
	Newsletter		N/A	N/A						
	Safeguarding	CBD	Y	N						
	UIS Rep.	JG	N	N/A						
	BCA Admin	KE	N/A	Y						

Note that Regional Council & Constituent body representatives are not required to submit reports and doing so is entirely at the representatives' discretion. Furthermore, Individual and Group Member representatives do not submit reports.

#### 5.0 Acceptance of previous meeting's minutes

AK stated he had made one minor amendment just before this meeting to improve the wording of one of RN's comments, plus fix a typo. The amended comment concerned why BCA weren't holding a council meeting immediately after the AGM.

**Motion to accept the minutes, as amended, of the previous Council meeting**

**Proposer:** Jenny Potts **Seconded:** Richard Vooght

**Abstentions:** PJ

**For:** TR, JP, TRY, LJW, CJB, SN, RV, DJ, MH

**Against:** None

**6.0 Officer Reports**

**6.1 Executive**

**6.1.1 Chair** (Rostam Namaghi)

*It has been an unfortunately busy time since the AGM - I'll start with some more positive news:*

**ICS Bid**

*We've had our final submission for the 2029 ICS bid at the UIS congress, where Andy, Zac and John Gunn are advancing the case for the UK.*

**Events in Student Caving**

*We have also been hit with many clubs in our student sector being approached by several unions wanting to reduce their 'reputational liability'. I was first made aware of this by Imperial College Caving Club, who asked me to directly intervene as their funding was being pulled 2 weeks prior to their expedition. I wrote a letter to their Student Union explaining how caving works and how strong the reputation of ICCG was within the caving and expeditionary communities - this worked but now appears to be the tip of the iceberg.*

*This has been caused by the consultancy 'Organised Fun' working on behalf of the NUS (National Union of Students) and Howden (both our Insurer and the company who insure many of the students Unions). Many people may be aware of the events at the University of Bristol but unfortunately this appears likely to affect 16 of our 25 University Clubs. Both Isaac and Tom are now engaged with explaining how caving works with 'Organised Fun'.*

*I cannot stress how sensitive this is - following an executive meeting I have sent an email to our University Clubs stressing that Y&D and CHECC are there to support them, that a tough line has to be taken and reiterated that we cannot allow qualification creep into the sector. I must add that Isaac has been doing a good job of communicating with affected members and keeping myself apprised of the situation.*

*If any organisation is approached for comment, please redirect them to Isaac - the university sector is our single largest recruiter into the sport. We have been very good at meeting this challenge in 3 or 4 unions a year in the past, but this one is very significant.*

### **Forest of Dean**

*Caving Wales were prompted to get in contact via Stuart France asking the BCA to coordinate and facilitate a meeting regarding the Forest of Dean becoming a separate region. As BCA have had a written invitation to do this, as an Executive we will arrange a Zoom meeting for the affected parties. There is limited precedent (DCUC splitting from the CSCC applies) and a formal vote at Council will occur once we have a formal entity we can recognise.*

*I have also been in extremely embryonic discussions regarding a hut from a couple of interested parties in the FoD. I spoke to Chris about the financial power of the BCA to intervene, should an opportunity present itself and we are distressingly limited - we desperately need to increase membership fees and pursue other forms of NGB funding. I personally feel Chris's proposed budget is the minimum we need to do but that it would be difficult to increase prices much higher. It also emphasises the need for incorporation so that we could, potentially, own assets.*

### **Incorporation**

*my own view is that the executive begin this work, co-opting individuals to provide advice regarding this (rather than a formal working group at this stage). Once we identify what exactly needs to be done, then a working group with specific terms of reference can be brought back to council. I am more than happy for council to disagree and require a formal vote on this matter.*

### **The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Access**

*David Rose has met Andy MacNae MP on my behalf regarding the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Access. i would like to note that Andy is an avid mountaineer and has been caving a few times and so is very favourably disposed towards us. It was a very productive meeting - Andy is very much in favour of the BCA policy on CRoW and invited us to submit evidence. As the deadline for submission of information was the 20th of July - I have done this, through collaboration with David Rose.*

*I propose that we capitalise on this by reforming the CRoW group, renaming them the National Access Working Group (to clearly identify it as a campaigning group regarding National level law and not to mediate any local access agreement). I am close to convincing a member to convene it but have not managed that ahead of this*

*meeting and so propose that I convene the first meeting and identify a suitable convener at that point.*

*Hopefully my next report to council is shorter!*

**Events in Student Caving:** RN states his report contains a large amount of information about the recent developments in student caving. However, he would like to emphasize that majority of the work in this area has been done by Isaac Neale, in his youth and development role.

**Forest of Dean:** JP adds that BCRA have been able to support Forest of Dean with a £1000 grant last year and are also able to offer loans.

#### **6.1.2 Treasurer (Chris Bolton)**

*There has been no unexpected or unbudgeted expenditure since the last Council meeting. Expenditure by the Youth and Development WG remains low, and by the Training and Equipment WG is still zero. Potential applications to the Conservation and Access WG have been discussed that may require the WG to use some contingency budget. That will be a matter for the C&A WG as and when the requests are formalised.*

*With support from other Council members, I have produced a Business Risk Assessment for BCA. This is Appendix 1 to the agenda. Council members will be asked to discuss it and vote on its acceptance. As one recommendation is to change the amount of capital kept in reserve, this vote must take place before the discussion on membership fees.*

**Motion: To accept the Business Risk Assessment and its recommendations.**

*I am recommending an increase in membership fees for 2026 and 2027. Although fees were increased for 2025 and we have set budgets for expenditure, we are still expecting a deficit this year, and costs are likely to increase next year. BCA was established as a national body to collect fees and distribute them to constituent bodies and needs to be able to provide the funding they expect. Appendix 2 contains a detailed proposal with supporting information. Council members are asked to read this and, if necessary, consult with those you represent, to inform your vote.*

*The proposal includes reference to a Development Fund. This is intended to separate the ongoing annual cost of running BCA from the one-off costs of improving our organisation and structure.*

**Motion: To accept the proposed membership fees for 2026 and 2027, including the creation of a Development Fund.**

*The Finance Committee has noted that the Appendix to the rules for Funding of Regional Councils states that regional grants for P&I, training*

*and anchor bolts are considered by the relevant Committee, not by the Finance Committee. So far as I'm aware, all regional grants in recent years (except C&A projects) have been through the Finance Committee. I would like Council's views on this, following which I will update the rules, with any references to 'Committee' (including the Finance Committee) being changed to the relevant Working Group.*

**Business Risk Assessment:** CJB introduces the business risk assessment he has completed for the BCA. The risk assessment concludes that that the two reserves in total could be covered by 75% of the turnover, rather than the previous 100%. CJB stresses the risk assessment needs voting on, and accepting before 2026 subscriptions can be discussed as the former will impact the latter.

LJW raises that CSCC have asked if more time can be given to consider the risk assessment. CJB says that ideally it needs to be agreed so the 2026 subscription can also be decided and communicated to members.

RN suggests the risk assessment could be agreed at this meeting and later amended if needed. CJB agrees with amending the risk assessment, except for the proportion of reserve, as this influences the subscriptions. Consequently, if the proportion of reserve is amended, then subscription rates will also need re-visiting. RN asks LJW to let CSCC know that the BCA have heard their concern and would be happy to discuss the risk assessment with them in the future.

LJW states she has been through the risk assessment with CJB and is personally happy but is in the situation of also representing the views of the CSCC. Shortly before this meeting she received an email from a CSCC officer concerned about lowering the reserve and potential impact if something unexpected happened, for example a large increase in the insurance premiums.

CJB adds that LJW did ask to circulate the risk assessment to interested bodies earlier, but it was felt council needed time to see and digest them first. CJB adds that going forward BCA should try to circulate documents such as the business risk assessment further in advance.

**Motion: To accept the Business Risk Assessment and its recommendations.**

**Proposer:** Chris Bolton **Seconder:** Mike Higgins

**Abstentions:** None

**For:** TR, JP, TRY, LJW, CJB, RN, SN, RV, DJ, VK, MH, PJ

**Against:** None

**Membership Fees:** CJB introduces his proposal on 2026 subscription

rates for membership. Firstly, he explains increases are needed because since 2015 BCA has run down its reserves and has been effectively subsidized the running of the association from the BCA savings. This adversely affected the reserves as reserves held was based on a percentage of income and not what was spent each year. CJB says BCA now need to replenish the reserves which will take a few years to achieve. The goal is to have the money and flexibility to properly support the regions.

CJB plans to email all members about the 2026 increase, and include what BCA funds support – access, youth and development, the library, GPF, training, equipment, anchors etc. As well as insurance. LJW adds that having a strong, effective national body is in all cavers interests but that does need funding.

**Motion: To accept the proposed membership fees for 2026 and 2027, including the creation of a Development Fund.**

**Proposer:** Chris Bolton, **Second:** Todd Rye

**Abstentions:** None

**For:** TR, JP, TRY, LJW, CJB, RN, SN, RV, DJ, VK, MH, PJ

**Against:** None

**Funding for Regional Councils:** CJB draws attention to the end of his report about tidying up the rules for funding regional councils. He states when council votes to accept the reports in general he will infer they are happy with him completing the tidying up described in the agenda. RN asks what tidying up is CJB suggesting?

CJB clarifies that currently the appendix to the funding document to regional councils says grants for anchor and training should be considered by the relevant committee, whereas in reality these decisions go through the finance committee. CJB is suggesting updating the appendix to reflect current practice. RN agrees it is a good idea to have written guidance that reflects what actually happens.

### **6.1.3 Secretary (Aidan Kuhlmann)**

*In the period since the AGM, I have represented the BCA at the NAMHO Annual conference which was successfully held in North Wales where I lead trips for the event and promoted some of the work of the BCA to those I met at the event.*

*Additionally, I have completed the first draft of the Manual of Operations which I have included in the appendices so that Council may review it and contact me with specific feedback. The goal has been to turn the document into a more cohesive explanation of how the BCA ought to work yet for it to not be so specific as to obscure more important details with other information that would be better*



contained within a handover document. Consequently, I have written it to be as flexible as reasonably possible yet hopefully detailed enough to ensure the proper functioning of the organisation.

Furthermore, I have updated the documents on the Insurance page of the website on the request of Josh White, alongside writing the new Terms of Reference for the Working Groups, and the usual array of communications – two of which being of note, both of which were received from Stuart France: the first is detailed in the Chair's report concerning the Forest of Dean and the second was a regarding a compelling argument that the CRoW Policy be amended to include Urban Commons following the Dartmoor Case. Regarding this second email I have informed Stuart that being a policy this can only be amended at an AGM, but it is positive to see even further positive ramifications of the Dartmoor ruling for outdoor access for all outdoor activities.

Finally, Katie has brought to my attention that the privacy policy needs updating, and I will be doing this following the completion of the new Manual of operations.

AK reports that in addition to his report he has also been making some changes and generally tidying up various areas of the website. AK has also been working on the draft manual of operations. This isn't up for a vote at this council meeting but hopefully will be ready for the next meeting.

AK has also been working on the terms of references for the working groups, including writing these from scratch for working groups that have never previously had them. These can be easily amended as needed, at a later date.

## **6.2 Regional Council & Representative Body Reports (Optional)**

### **6.2.1 CNCC (Todd Rye)**

*There was a CNCC meeting last month, my first as chair. It was a packed agenda, and we had a time limit, so we had to move efficiently. The biggest point to raise was regarding our anchor program, which Ian Walker has now taken over to bring it up to scratch. The below caves were approved for anchoring. More volunteers were co-opted into roles, to help the organisation run even more smoothly. I have also pencilled a letter to the APPG for access to nature, which I believe the BCA are also submitting something to. The Red Rose CPC hosted the inaugural "Easegill event" rigging several entrances and opening the Rosy Bar at the Farm, welcoming cavers to come join for caving and merriment. All in all, the northern wheels keep turning, and caving continues in earnest.*

Routes approved for anchoring:

- North End Pot (original EPC route, recently stabilised).

- Wizard's Chasm - Two pitches currently from very poor non-CNCC anchors.
- Thunder Pot (current dig likely to yield 70m pitch to Brown Hill Streamway)
- Bull Pot of the Witches - replacing non-CNCC anchors to top of Chimney Route
- Providence/Dowbergill - replacing non-CNCC anchors which are absolutely required with no addition of any further non-essential anchors.

The latest edition of our newsletter can be found here:

<https://cncc.org.uk/publications/>

RN notes that his letter to the APPG was very similar to the one from CNCC. TRY agrees they were and states it is good BCA and CNCC are on the same page.

### **6.2.2 Ogofa Cymru/Caving Wales** (Allan Richardson)

The main news is that the Forest of Dean Cave Conservation and Access group (FoDDCAG) is planning on becoming a regional body in its own right, currently they are part of Ogofa Cymru/Caving Wales. The Ogofa Cymru/Caving Wales Committee have agreed in principle to the split, it will need an AGM decision on our part to finalise it at some point.

DYO water level recorder, this was damaged by flooding and lightning strikes last year, it is now repaired and under test, it is planned to reinstall it later in the year.

The OFD water level recorder is still functioning well and the information to access the link is available at SWCC and at the following links:

- <https://swcc.grafana.net/public-dashboards/888b896eda8447fd8691bdeeeec0c2b82?orgId=1&from=now-7d&to=now&refresh=10m&timezone=browser>
- <https://thingspeak.mathworks.com/channels/2574933>

No comments or questions raised at the meeting.

### **6.2.3 DCA** (Mike Higgins)

Little to add to the report submitted to the last BCA Council meeting. DCA is still without a Project Officer, so continuing the attempt to recruit a new Equipment Officer to free up Pete Knight, we're trying a novel approach in the form of a "situation vacant" type half-page advert which will appear in the next issue of Descent. Some works to repair Derbyshire Key mechanisms have been carried out, thanks to local cavers, at Mandale Mine, Whalf Mine and the marble mine in Lathkill Dale. These have been modified to prevent nuts being dropped down shafts or lost and not replaced.

Work continues at Masson Quarry and the new owners are arranging a "Masson Fest" over the weekend of 18th/19th October 2025 with camping, films, workshops, talks and, hopefully, a couple of underground trips into Great Masson Cavern. A detailed programme will be publicised nearer the date. The meeting with the National Trust has taken place regarding access to Faucet Rake and they are very supportive of DCA's proposals.

RN asks MH if there will be a Descent report on Masson-fest. MH says he hopes there will be.

#### **6.2.4 CSCC (Linda Wilson)**

##### **Officers:**

The CSCC meeting took place on Friday 9th May 2025 at 7.00pm, online using Zoom. The meeting was well attended and uncontentious. The majority of the officers re-stood and were re-elected. The officers are: David Cooke (Chair and Webmaster), Frank Tully (Secretary), Tom Harrison (Treasurer), Wayne Starsmore (Conservation & Access), Andrew Atkinson (Equipment & Techniques), Matty Dredge (Deputy E&T), Linda Wilson (BCA Rep), Peter Burgess (Communications Officer). The role of Training Officer is now vacant. CSCC thanked Dave Keegan for all his work in this capacity.

The Chair's suggestion of 'officer shadowing/deputy' roles to assist in widening participation in key roles and helping to future-proof organisational capabilities. Our E&T Officer is pleased to welcome Matty Dredge to the role. Matty had worked with Andrew on various projects and is now trained in bolting techniques. Linda is equally pleased to introduce Joshitha Shivkumar who will be working with her on the CSCC BCA Rep role. The BCA Secretary has kindly added Joshitha to the Council mailing list. Where possible, she will attend Council meetings on the usual custom and practice for attendance by observers.

##### **Access & Conservation matters:**

Major C&A projects are as follows. Others are also ongoing.

Cheddar Gorge: CSCC's C&A Officer has reached the stage of a draft access agreement that is acceptable to their Board and their solicitors. This has been circulated to CSCC member clubs in advance of an EGM now scheduled for Monday 7th July 2025 at 7pm by Zoom. This will then need to be ratified at the next general meeting in August as to maintain momentum, the required notice for an EGM was shortened as otherwise we risked this dropping off the Board's agenda.

Welsh's Green Swallet: The parking information in the CSCC Access Guide has been amended to read "Park in the layby in front of the waterworks. DO NOT block the gates as access is required by BW at all

times. Further parking is available down the road, on the verge on the right just after Milton Manor. Approach the cave along the bridleway opposite the waterworks compound. Do not stray from the bridleway especially during the pheasant season. The cave entrance is in a small depression to the right of the bridleway."

Stock Lane Slocker: A few days after a recent rescue in Stoke Lane Slocker, persons unknown rolled a large boulder into the entrance, nearly completely blocking it. The boulder was removed by reducing it to manageable chunks using plug and feathers and stacking it neatly under the adjacent cliff face. Whilst there, the main sink was cleared of much flood debris.

Thrupe Lane: The first session to stabilise the boulder in Butt's Chamber has been completed. Seven volunteers transported 100kg of sand, 25kg of cement and 50kg of Postcrete down through Hobnail Hole, along with various tools and mixing trays. Dave King supervised activities under ground and succeed in building a solid wall that will hold up the lower left of the boulder. Expenses for this work came to £50.20. Another session has been pencilled in for the 4th July to build a wall under the lower right of the boulder and this should complete the stabilisation work. The expected cost of materials, for this second session, will be around £25.

For anyone wishing to cave in the southern region, up to date information can be found on our access guide <https://access-guide.csc.org.uk/>. In addition, our website can be found at <https://csc.org.uk/wiki/>.

### **Events:**

The recent Cave the Sun event was successful. The competition element was dropped due to insufficient sign ups. The event went ahead as a social at Priddy Village Hall with a bar and barbeque.

RN states he likes the CSCC idea of shadowing officer roles and is keen to trial similar within BCA, if it works well for CSCC. LJW confirms that Joshitha is attending this meeting a shadowing role and it great to have the scheme up and running.

Since writing her report LJW states a CSCC EGM has been held that was well attended by clubs. Officers were authorised to sign the agreement with Longleat. This will need to be ratified at a future meeting but is a good step forward and also keeps the momentum going with Longleat.

## **6.3 Working Group Convenor Reports**

### **6.3.1 Conservation & Access (Victoria Kocher)**

*On the 25th of June a meeting was held online with the members of the C and A working group. Considerations in this meeting were the following:*

*A proposal from CNCC received by Kay Easton to assist funding for the Nidderdale cave system. This is to support the reopening of the entrance which has been blocked for 110 years. They have sourced most of the project on their own but request £400 to finish the project. The members in attendance felt this was a worthwhile project and should be considered for the funding.*

*The DCA is working alongside the new owners of the Masson quarry in the Matlock area to protect the SSSI sites on their land. I have met with the owner and a representative of PICA to establish a positive relationship for caving in the area.*

*CSCC reported their access agreement with the Longleat Estate. Wayne Starsmore is working to call an EGM in August to keep the momentum going and move forward with policies and procedures covering Spider Hole, Reservoir Hole and Gough's cave.*

*Tim Nicholls from FoDCCAG has circulated an email regarding an application for conservation works in Marble River in Redhouse Lane Swallet. Tim has submitted documents, photographs and surveys about the work to be considered. The sum is considerable so it should be considered by the committee.*

*VK asks for clarification from BCA on how funding requests from regional councils should be dealt with, within the C and A working group. CJB states regional councils were asked to submit budgets for expected expenditure, which was all put in a pot and is now up to the working group to decide how it is spent. Although CJB suggested regional councils that request funds they have budgeted for should maybe be considered above those requesting funds they did not budget for. However, CJB points out there is contingency built into the pot, for expenditure that was not expected.*

*CJB has emailed VK with an amount of money, and for major projects it is up to VK and the C and A working group to decide which projects to fund. RN adds that VK should then inform BCA of the decision and where to send the money. CJB is unsure why CNCC have submitted a request for £400 to the C and A working group, as this amount should come from within their budget and not from the working group budget. Although the spending is worthwhile and BCA supports funding it.*

*On a more general note, CJB requests all working groups report to him as to how much of their 2025 budget has been used so far this year, and if they expect to spend it all, or half of it etc. This would help CJB with planning and maintaining the reserve.*

### **6.3.2 Publications & Information** (Zac Woodford)

*Continued work on the handbook but I'm still waiting for many clubs to give us info. Explored some potential for just go. Many thanks to Katie for that.*

RN would like to add that ZW has been putting together a survey to send round to the BCA membership. If anyone present at the meeting has any questions, they would like including please contact ZW.

### **6.3.3 Qualification Management Committee** (George Plant)

*No report received.*

Gethin Thomas is stepping in for GP who couldn't make this meeting. GP is looking to stand down from his role as chair of QMC but is willing to stay in the role until a replacement is found. GT reports that QMC have been busy redrafting all the syllabuses to standardize them and make them more coherent.

GT reports he also sits on the Outdoor Alliance, a cross-party group which includes representatives from Welsh Government. They look at outdoor education, conservation, and access amongst other topics. GT is hoping to represent BCA at the launch of the manifesto on the 24<sup>th</sup> September in Cardiff.

RN asks if Caving Wales have been involved. GT clarifies that CW were initially involved but later pulled out. They have been kept informed. RN asks if BCA can provide any help? GT states he will keep that offer in mind and get back to BCA if anything comes up that BCA could help with. AK offers to potentially attend and help if he is available.

### **6.3.4 Radon** (Dormant)

GT reports that a North Wales mine is currently being sampled and the data will be added to the BCA website.

### **6.3.5 Training & Equipment**

*No report received.*

AK states he has received during the meeting an email report from Steve Gray. The email states: 'Vince is running an installation day, late August for Cambrian region bolt installers. We need to look at ordering another batch of bolts, but I'm awaiting numbers. I've dealt with a steady trip of inquiries about starting to cave and training, and I direct them to the relevant regional sites for new to caving. Thanks. Steve.'

### **6.3.6 Youth & Development** (Isaac Neale)

*Rostam has summed up the NUS/ Organised Fun situation very well and I have nothing to add in that regard. I am in close contact with many people involved (including non-caving students at Bristol University) and am keeping a close eye on new developments. A new*

*document on guidelines and student caving specifically in relation to the NUS working groups wording is being drafted.*

IN has nothing to add to his report at this time. RN asks IN to keep in close communications with the student clubs concerning the issues with Organised Fun. IN confirms he will and adds that he has found the earlier comments about spending funds within working groups really useful.

#### **6.4 Additional Reports by Appointed Officers**

##### **6.4.1 British Caving Library** (Jenny Potts)

*Nothing to report.*

JP states this nothing to add since her lengthy report to the AGM. Members of the library team continue to work on the large volume of publications waiting to be catalogued.

##### **6.4.2 FSE Representative** (Allan Richardson)

*Nothing to report other than the latest issue of the FSE Newsletter is available.*

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/EuroSpeleo-Newsletter-June-2025-FR.pdf>

No comments or questions raised at the meeting.

##### **6.4.3 Insurance Manager**

No comments or questions raised at the meeting.

##### **6.4.4 Safeguarding Officer** (Chris Boardman)

*No report received.*

CBD reports that in his role he answers a lot of questions and enquiries from clubs who are keen to take young people caving and get safeguarding right but doesn't often have anything to report to council. He is happy to stay in the role and support BCA.

RN reiterates his thanks from the AGM, for the work CBD does quietly, behind the scenes.

##### **6.4.5 Newsletter Editor** (Vacant)

No comments or questions raised at the meeting.

##### **6.4.6 UIS Representative** (Ged campion)

*Report will be given at following Council Meeting under new officer and following the GAM.*

RN states John Gunn has been given a letter allowing him to represent BCA at the UIS Congress in Brazil, as Ged is not attending. This allows JG to vote on behalf of BCA.

## 6.5 Reports by BCA Staff

### 6.5.1 Membership Administrator, Artificial Cave, & Insurance (Katie Eavis)

#### **New club:**

*No new clubs have applied since the last meeting.*

#### **Individual BCA members**

*6385 people have joined BCA for 2025 – this includes members joining directly and also those joining via clubs.*

#### **Insurance:**

*In response to a query from a member Howdens have confirmed that the membership insurance policy will cover qualified cavers giving free of charge advice/ guidance within a club environment. (Any advice involving payment will still need to be covered separately by the qualified caver and will not fall into the remit of the membership scheme.)*

#### **Artificial Cave:**

*The cave has been busy and has now been out to 12 bookings this year. Feedback from these events is that it is really appreciated and the kids love it!*

*The trailer electric plug got accidentally squashed and has been replaced with a modern 13 pin plug (It's had been on the old 7 pin). I have also ordered some new nuts for the bolts that hold the cave together as we are running low.*

#### **BCA AGM vote**

*Voting is now open for the 2025 BCA AGM voting. All current members of BCA should have received an email, as long as we hold an email address for them. I have also posted about the vote on UKcaving, Facebook and BuddlePit.*

#### **Privacy Policy**

*After a query from a club membership secretary, I have realised the membership section of the BCA privacy policy on our website is out of date. I am working on an update of this.*

*RN mentions that the current number of members is about what is expected for time of year. AK adds that this shows BCA membership levels have been steady for the last 3 years and is not declining.*

*CJB reports on the AGM voting results:*

*1. Voting for motions at the AGM and deciding whether they could be accepted at the AGM, if they got a large acceptance That was passed with 148 people in favour, 19 against, which is 88.6% in favour, and 11 people abstained*

*2. The second motion, which was the one about exempting certain policies from having to be approved by the AGM and just being approved by council:*

*Passed with 159 for, 11 against which is 93.5% in favour, 8 people abstained.*



A high proportion of the initial vote emails went to member's spam folders. CJB has discussed this with Simon and Katie. The follow up 'vote reminder' email largely went straight to inboxes. This second email was sent from a 'no reply' address, as suggested by JustGo, which does seem to result in less emails going to spam. CJB will continue to talk to Simon, and JustGo directly about this issue.

CJB will also raise with JustGo that ballot IDs were hard to find in each member's account and could not be sent out via email to all members. JustGo were aware that the intention was to email ballot IDs but were not able to provide a method of emailing them when needed.

RN adds he has been contacted by members who would like more emails before the BCA AGM to promote attendance. CJB says he has discovered in the JustGo contract that BCA were entitled to more emails per month, than we had been allocated. This has been raised with JustGo who have agreed and increased the email allowance.

Whilst on the topic of the AGM RN raises that he would like to see a return of the BCA AGM 'party' weekends of the past and would like to hear from any region that could help organise one. This year's AGM worked but wasn't an opportunity for cavers to network and socialize in the way RN would like it to be.

JP adds that regions have organised these in the past. Putting on interesting events on the same weekend as the AGM would encourage attendance. JP stresses having a date well in advance is needed to organise a bigger event around the AGM. RN states any date in June could be made to work if a volunteer came forward to help organise this.

LJW asks how many people attended in person and online? AK states 18 altogether – ~10 in person and ~8 online. TR states the turnout of voters was very low when membership is over 6000. RN states it is better than pre-online voting! CJB points out significantly more members voted in the 2024 elections. RN reckons this is due to both elections being more exciting and contentious and emails being more effective the previous year.

**Proposal: Accept the Officers reports as above**

**Proposer:** Rostam Namaghi **Seconder:** Chris Bolton

**Abstentions:** None

**For:** TR, JP, TRY, LJW, CJB, SN, RV, DJ, MH, PJ

**Against:** None

**7.0 Matters arising from the previous Council Meeting**

No comments or questions raised at the meeting.

**8.0 Items for Discussion**

**8.1 Working Groups**

**8.1.1 Proposal to adopt the Anchor Working Group under the submitted Terms of Reference.**

AK introduces the reasoning behind the formation of a new Anchor Working Group. Previously Anchors have been under the Training and Equipment WG, however Anchors are a specialist area that attracts a some very keen, knowledgeable people. By splitting Anchors from Training and Equipment both groups would be able to operate better and more efficiently, as the two groups would better fit members' passions and enthusiasm. It would also reduce the time the meetings take, as less topics would need to be covered at one meeting.

RN states it has been a struggle to get the T&E group to meet recently, and one of the issues is finding someone able and willing to do the admin tasks, such as minute writing. Splitting Anchors from T&E will hopefully make both groups more manageable. RN suggests CJB and AK chair the first meeting of the new Anchor group, and himself and AK will do the same for the next meeting of the T and E group. The aim being to invite along as many interested people as possible and hopefully engage someone to lead the groups.

RN asks if those present have had the chance to look at the terms of reference? He states the important bit is the remit for each group, so they are aware of what their scope is. The rest is more generic, including the documentation they are expected to keep.

**8.1.2 Proposal to approve the Conservation & Access Working Group under the submitted Terms of Reference and appoint Victoria Kocher as the convenor.**

LJW questions why the terms of reference for the C and A group don't provide a guaranteed seat for the regions. She would like to the regions guaranteed seat going forward.

AK suggests adding a line under the membership heading to state 'regional councils will be invited automatically'. LJW thinks would be fine.

**8.1.3 Proposal to approve the Finance Working Group under the submitted Terms of Reference and appoint the BCA Treasurer as the convenor.**

AK states some small changes have been made recently to the Finance Terms of Reference. AK asks CJB to confirm he, as treasurer, is happy with those changes. CJB confirms he is.

**8.1.4 Proposal to adopt the National Access Working Group under the submitted Terms of Reference.**

AK explains that this working group would lead BCA's interaction with other bodies on a national level, promoting greater access for caving

and administering the CROW policy.

RN states he will convene the first meeting and try to find someone to lead it going forward.

**8.1.5 Proposal to approve the Publications & Information Working Group under the submitted Terms of Reference and appoint Zac Woodford as the convenor.**

AK states P&I have previously had terms of reference, and new terms are broadly similar to what was already in place.

**8.1.6 Proposal to approve the Qualifications Management Committee Working Group under the submitted Terms of Reference and appoint George Plant as the convenor.**

QMC haven't previously had a term of reference but should have one. AK has written one that hopefully reflects what QMC do and how they operate. He is happy for QMC to suggest amendments. GT says this is the first time he has seen it, but he thinks QMC should meet and review it.

RN suggests amending the proposal for this meeting to approve the QMC working group with pending terms of reference. AK will update the proposal to state the terms of reference for QMC are pending at this stage.

CJB wishes to explain some wording within the QMC terms of reference – the aim for QMC to be cost neutral. This is not a change as QMC has always aimed to balance its accounts, however CJB would like it's written down as training is VAT exempt if it does not make a profit.

**8.1.7 Proposal to approve the Training & Equipment Working Group under the submitted Terms of Reference.**

*We have struggled to find a volunteer internally owing to the significant workload and lengthy meetings that were taking place. In order to find volunteers, we propose that we split the Anchor group from T&E into its own group and that Aidan and Chris chair and co-ordinate the first meeting of the Anchor Group and that myself and Aidan co-ordinate the first meeting of T&E.*

AK states the changes mostly reflect the split with the Anchor working group. A sentence has been included about encouraging strategic development and research in caving techniques. This is to enable BCA to support endeavours to facilitate development of devices/ techniques within sport caving.

**8.1.8 Proposal to approve the Youth & Development Working Group under the submitted Terms of Reference and appoint Isaac Neale as the convenor.**

AK states terms of reference basically promote liaising and working with people to support youth caving.

RN adds the importance of producing minutes for transparency.

**8.1.9 Proposal to recognise the Radon Working Group as dormant.**

No comments or questions raised at the meeting.

**Proposal: To accept the working groups, and terms of reference for those working groups, as described above in the minutes.**

**Proposer:** Aidan Kuhlmann **Seconder:** Rostam Namaghi

**Abstentions:** PJ

**For:** TR, JP, TRY, LJW, CJB, SN, RV, DJ, MH

**Against:** None

**8.2 Proposal to nominate Dr John Gunn as the UIS representative and permit him to appoint the deputy UIS Representative.**

**Proposer:** Mike Higgins **Seconder:** Jenny Potts

**Abstentions:** None

**For:** TR, JP, TRY, LJW, CJB, SN, RV, DJ, MH, PJ

**Against:** None

**8.3 Proposal to nominate Tom Phillips as the FSE representative and permit him to appoint the deputy FSE Representative.**

RN introduces the proposal to nominate Tom Philips, the current CHECC representative, to become FSE representative. The current FSE representative, Allan Richardson, does not wish to continue in the role.

RN also explains that as Chair he is automatically a delegate and can attend and vote at FSE meetings. RN explains both FSE and UIS allow a deputy to be appointed, to increase the likelihood meetings can be attended and votes cast.

**Proposer:** Todd Rye **Seconder:** Tony Radmall

**Abstentions:** None

**For:** TR, JP, TRY, LJW, CJB, SN, RV, DJ, MH, PJ

**Against:** None

**8.4 Proposal to reappoint Chris Boardman as the Safeguarding Officer.**

**Proposer:** Tony Radmall **Seconder:** Stephan Natynczuk

**Abstentions:** None

**For:** TR, JP, TRY, LJW, CJB, SN, RV, DJ, MH, PJ

**Against:** None

## 8.5 Vacant Positions

*As a matter of order, I am noting here that the following pre-existing positions are currently vacant:*

- *Individual Members Representative 2025-27*
- *Group Members Representative 2025-2027*
- *Insurance Officer*
- *Newsletter Officer*

*Note that the IT Working Group is not being continued and for now Christ Bolton will continue to coordinate with Simon Mullens as the BCA's paid IT support, as per the BCA's current IT arrangements.*

*If any persons are interested in these positions, they are advised to contact the Executive so that we can provide information and guidance in supporting anyone to fulfilling these roles.*

- Aidan Kuhlmann

## 9.0 Any Other Business

### **Proposal to reappoint John Sheehy Scrutiniser for the annual accounts**

**Proposer:** Chris Bolton **Seconder:** John Sheehy

**Abstentions:** None

**For:** TR, JP, TRY, LJW, CJB, SN, RV, DJ, MH, PJ

**Against:** None

## 10.0 Details of the Next Meeting

RN proposes BCA council decrease the number of meetings by one. He suggests 16<sup>th</sup> of September, 25<sup>th</sup> of November, 20<sup>th</sup> of January, 17<sup>th</sup> of March – although this one might be subject to change.

There was some discussion about the best timing for the council meeting nearest the AGM. This included when proposals to be voted on by the membership need to be submitted.

RN thanks everyone for attending the meeting, especially AK for pulling all the documentation together. RN is pleased to see BCA moving forward, and the good work done by this meeting. LJW echoes the thanks for all the hard work.



## **Business Risk Assessment**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This assessment considers the potential effect on the Association of unplanned events, in financial and other terms. The objective is to identify preventative and mitigating measures and inform development strategy. It is required as a matter of good business practice and to review the amount of capital retained as Reserves.

#### **1.1 Reserves**

BCA Council decided historically that BCA should maintain reserves of capital to ensure that the Association remains viable following unexpected events. The details are recorded in Council minutes, principally of 5 June 2010. These are:

Insurance Reserve: This is nominally equal to one year's insurance premiums (in some minutes, also stated as plus twice the claim excess but see below). It is intended to fund payment of a very large increase in premium following a large claim and thereby allow the insurance to continue in force.

General Reserve: This is nominally equal to one year's turnover less one year's insurance premiums. Turnover is not defined but is generally assumed to mean income. It is intended to cover unspecified events not related to insurance. No information has been found giving examples of the events for which the reserve is necessary.

Real interest rates after allowing for inflation have been negative since 2009 and have been -2% to to -3% pa in recent years, so holding these reserves has cost BCA in the order of £3k per per year. Currently, each reserve is approximately equal to the target. Any changing in the target, up or down, will influence the need to raise membership fees, but that is a separate issue not for discussion here.

### **2.0 Risks**

#### **2.1 Substantial increase in Public Liability Insurance premium**

The historical justification for the Insurance Reserve is a large increase in premium resulting from a large Public Liability claim, probably arising from either:

(1) A caving accident where a BCA member was held responsible for the death or injury of another caver, such as negligently knocking a rock down a pitch, or a

member club was held liable for an accident on a club trip. Similar claims have occurred in other sports. A reduction of the claim for contributory negligence is possible. Experienced cavers are generally considered to be responsible for their own safety. Novices on club trips must still take some responsibility but cannot manage risks that they don't fully understand. In a group with mixed experience, irrespective of formal roles, the more experienced cavers may have a higher duty of care, so claims are more likely in mixed groups than in those with uniform experience. Claims on the BMC insurance have resulted in premium increases. BCA does not appear to have records of successful claims and it may be worthwhile asking our broker, Howden, whether they have records.

(2) A claim against a landowner by a member of the public as a result of caving on their land, such as a person or animal falling into an open dig. BCA insurance includes this cover, for events caused by members and, under certain conditions, non-members, to reassure landowners that if there were such a claim, they would be covered. The intention is that removing this risk from the landowner removes a reason to prohibit access to caves on their land. The risk of such an accident is probably lower than the risk of an accident to a caver, but the potential for a claim may be similar or higher. Members of the public may be likely to sue a landowner (who they may perceive as wealthy) while a caver may be reluctant to sue a fellow caver. Even if no damages were awarded, an insurance claim for the costs of defending the action might be made.

There is also the possibility that a landowner could sue a member for damages resulting from cavers' actions on their land, such as injury to people or livestock or pollution of a water source.

BCA's insurance does not cover a landowner for claims resulting from the landowner's own negligence.

The basis for the amount of the Insurance Reserve was that two claims might be made, each resulting in payment of the policy excess, and a doubling of the premium for the next year. The current policy, however, has no excess for public liability and the excess for property is either £100 or £250 depending on the amount insured.

BCA has four insurance policies. The base policy covers property, employers' liability, etc, and up to £2M public liability. The PL (only) is topped up from £2M to £5m, then £5M to £10M and finally £10M to £20M, by the other three.

In recent years the base policy has included a 'long term agreement' that provided the total claims in a year don't exceed 25% of the premium (ie, claims not more than about £10k), the next year's premium will only rise by 5%. These amounts are not significant in terms of reserves. The agreement is reaching expiry and, unless extended, will not apply to premiums paid in 2026.

It is understood, from a personal contact with a senior role in insurance, unconnected with the policy, that underwriters will typically set the premium on the basis of a grouping of similar policies and that claims on the BCA policy alone would not double the premium. The converse would also apply, that claims from kindred sports could also affect the BCA premium, although the claims by BMC haven't had a significant effect on BCA. This is also something Howden may be able to advise on.

It is also possible that an underwriter could change their risk appetite even without a large claim being made. Unlike motor or home insurance, there is no large pool of customers from which risk can be extrapolated, so premiums must be based on their perception of the risk. Events such as the rescue of the Thai teenage footballers or the big rescue in South Wales in 2021 could influence that perception, probably adversely. Publicity for successful caving exploits, and public participation via show caves and Gaping Gill winch meets, may be beneficial.

**Likelihood:** Significant risk of a caver-to-club or caver-to-caver claim, not necessarily for the full £20M.

**Consequence (unmitigated):** In the short term, BCA would be unable to renew the PL policy without making an emergency call for funds to the membership, which might not be successful. In the longer term, a large increase in membership fees could result in a loss of members and threaten the viability of BCA.

**Current mitigation:** Insurance reserve

**Other mitigation:** Ensure clubs understand their duty of care to novices. Other sports appear to be more risk averse than caving, eg, Paddle UK will shortly require club leaders to be qualified. There would be strong objections if BCA expected that but the risk must be understood. Consider providing information to clubs to raise awareness of risk management and duty of care, including reference to incidents in other sports.

**Recommendation:** A reserve is necessary. There is no necessity to separate the Insurance Reserve from the General Reserve. The potential for co-incidental demands on the reserve from different causes should be taken into account in assessing the size of reserve required.

**Action:** Review any claims records held by BCA. If BCA records are inadequate, ask Howden if they have such. Also ask Howden if they can comment on the degree to which the premium may be affected by claims on BCA's policy and by claims in kindred sports such as climbing, canyoning and paddling.

## 2.2 Claim greater than the policy limit or outside the scope of cover

The total limit for public liability claims was increased to £20M in 2024. This is ahead of the trend for similar organisations (although based on advice) and it is not likely to be exceeded.



The limit for employer's liability is £10M. This is high, for the number of staff employed and is not likely to be exceeded.

If these limits were to be exceeded, it is likely they would be exceeded by millions, making BCA bankrupt. An example of this kind of claim could be where a dig in an abandoned mine resulted in a release of minewater causing serious contamination to a public water supply. It is not clear who would be liable for any debts.

The limits for property are adequate, in relation to the value of property that BCA owns or is responsible for, and the value of property, if unclaimable, is small compared to BCA's turnover.

The four insurers who cover the different stages of public liability represent all the major insurers who are prepared to cover caving. It is possible that one or more could refuse cover in future, resulting in a greater uninsured liability.

**Likelihood:** Low or very low

**Consequence (unmitigated):** Very high for Public or Employer Liability, otherwise low.

**Current mitigation:** Reserves (unlikely to be adequate for this scenario)

**Other mitigation:** BCA converting to a limited company.

**Recommendation:** Consider making BCA a limited company, probably by guarantee.

## 2.3 Data and IT

The three principal aspects of IT security are confidentiality, integrity and availability (CIA). Any of these can be affected by malicious action, faults or commercial failures.

Confidentiality means ensuring that data is only accessed by people who should do so. Members' details are particularly sensitive. Processing is now done via JustGo and Stripe who are responsible for security, but details can be downloaded by relevant officers and staff. If they are stored in the BCA Google Workspace with 2FA they are reasonably secure, but may be less secure on personal laptops. A BCA laptop is used for QMS work. Other staff and officers use their own laptops which may be a risk.

There was a data breach in 2024 whereby members' addresses were accessible online. This was from a legacy system, now decommissioned. Discussion with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) suggested that it was not formally reportable. Any future data leak might be treated more seriously; ICO have levied large fines on organisations which have suffered data leaks, even if those leaks have resulted from cyber attacks. As a non-corporate organisation it is unclear

whether any fines would be paid by BCA or individual officers (fines cannot be insured against).

BCA was unable to renew its Cyber insurance in 2024 as our infrastructure (based on a bare server) was insufficiently secure. Now that the infrastructure has been updated to Workspace and hosted servers this should be reviewed. The definition of what is not covered is wider than malicious action and includes the consequences of errors in data input, software or hardware configuration or maintenance. Spontaneous failure of hardware does not appear to be excluded. Cyber cover for liability to employees is included under the Employer's Liability section.

Loss caused by any failures by our suppliers, Google, AWS, Krystal, JustGo, etc, should be recoverable from them.

**Likelihood:** Moderate

**Consequence (unmitigated):** Loss of data, potential inability to collect membership fees, prosecution for personal data breach.

**Current mitigation:** Professionally hosted services

**Other mitigation:** Staff and officers use better security procedures, staff use BCA laptops, renew cyber insurance. BCA converting to a limited company.

**Recommendation:** Require staff and officers to use better security procedures, purchase laptops for two staff, renew cyber insurance (including any measures necessary to be eligible to do so). Consider making BCA a Company Limited by Guarantee.

## 2.4 Restrictions on caving (Pandemic, Foot & Mouth, etc)

Both the Covid-19 pandemic and historical (2001 and 1967) Foot and Mouth epidemics resulted in restrictions on access to rural areas. Further similar events are not improbable and could result in no access to caves and a downturn in membership income. While some BCA costs would reduce in proportion, there would be a disruptive effect and potentially some additional expense in managing the situation. Such events, outside anyone's control, are known as 'force majeure' and contracts may be unenforceable – BCA has few contractual obligations and is more likely to be affected adversely if our suppliers such as JustGo have difficulties.

While many activities moved online during the pandemic, large scale disruption to power supplies and global or regional internet connectivity is also possible, as a result of natural phenomena or malicious agents.

**Likelihood:** Moderate to high

**Consequence (unmitigated):** Disruption and loss of income (£20k?)

**Current mitigation:** General Reserve

**Other mitigation:** An outline plan including ways to maintain contact with members and retain their interest, and to continue internal operations, would enable action to be taken quickly.

**Recommendation:** Consider developing plans for such events.

## **2.5 Loss of banking – bank failure or account closure**

BCA has its day-to-day banking with HSBC. This consists of a main current account, a separate current account for QMC, a deposit account and a credit card. BCA also has savings accounts with Redwood Bank, United Trust Bank and Mansfield Building Society. The savings accounts require notice of withdrawals which must be transfers to the HSBC account.

The total invested with any single banking licence is within the £83k limit for reimbursement by FSCS, except for UTB which is slightly over, but within the rumoured increase in the limit. The risk of losing funds directly is therefore low.

A more significant risk is that HSBC closes our account. Money laundering legislation gives banks the right to close any account without giving a reason and innocent people and organisations (including caving clubs) have had accounts closed.

In the short term it would be difficult to pay BCA staff, pay monthly fees for IT or receive membership income. The consequences would be very disruptive but not necessarily a significant direct financial cost. Setting up an account with a new bank is laborious and would require a Council meeting to authorise a mandate, although that could be done quickly with Zoom. There is no limit in the Constitution on the notice for a Council meeting.

A mitigation would be to set up a new account with a different bank, in advance. Banks may be unlikely to accept an application to open an account unless there would be banking activity. One possibility would be to move the QMS current account to a new bank so that it could be used as backup but that would be inconvenient and may be seen to have unintended political implications.

**Likelihood:** Low but not negligible

**Consequence (unmitigated):** Significant disruption. Not significant for reserves.

**Current mitigation:** None

**Other mitigation:** Avoid transactions which may appear suspicious.

**Recommendation:** Investigate setting up a 'backup' account.

## 2.6 Legal challenge or need for advice

A situation may arise where BCA feel it necessary to defend an action in court, either on its own behalf or that of a Regional Council or member club. This could be, for example, following an access dispute with a landowner, where failure to defend the case could effectively create a precedent. In this situation, a capital reserve would be essential, to cover legal costs.

It is outside the scope of this assessment to consider the merits of litigation versus other activity such as lobbying. A decision by BCA to initiate legal action, however, as was done with regard to CRow, would fall outside the scope of an emergency reserve. Any elective litigation would require specific funding.

It may be necessary to seek legal or other expert advice on matters associated with management of BCA, such as tax liability or incorporation. If unplanned, this might fall within the scope of a reserve, or it might be included in the budget for a project such as incorporation.

**Likelihood:** Low to moderate

**Consequence (unmitigated):** Potential loss of access

**Current mitigation:** General reserve would cover immediate costs

**Other mitigation:** None

**Recommendation:** Review the likelihood that BCA might wish to take legal action.

## 2.7 Property damage or loss; fraud

BCA property or assets could be damaged by, for example, Fire, Theft, Fraud or other criminal acts. These are generally insured against and with the exception of Fraud are discussed above.

UK banks are legally required to reimburse victims of fraud, subject to the victim having taken reasonable care. The recent change to Dual Control on the HSBC accounts, although made to ensure compliance with BCA's Constitution, does provide some protection against internal fraud and, more likely, external scams.

**Likelihood:** Low for Internal fraud. Moderate for external scams.

**Consequence (unmitigated):** Financial loss, probably not more than £5k

**Current mitigation:** Dual Control, general caution, Insurance where covered

**Other mitigation:**

**Recommendation:** Follow process and maintain vigilance

## 2.8 Loss of key people

BCA depends on both volunteers and part time staff who are geographically separated. There is limited overlap between roles, and the loss of anyone through resignation or ill health is significant. This has been illustrated by the ill health retirement of our membership administrator and the lasting effects of a rapid turnover of senior officers several years ago. One of our staff is over state retirement age and another is within 5 years of it.

**Likelihood:** Moderate to high

**Consequence (unmitigated):** Disruption, loss of effectiveness and reduced support from cavers. Training costs for new staff.

**Current mitigation:** None

**Other mitigation:** Shadowing of key roles

**Recommendation:** Consider appointment of 'shadow' or 'deputy' officer roles, ideally to be filled by additional people but if not, by existing officers. Ensure that staff understand each other's roles. Develop the image of BCA among cavers. Make personal approaches to potential volunteers.

## 2.9 Legal non-compliance

BCA is effectively a business, with a turnover of over £150k. There is a wide scope of legislation on tax, employment and other aspects of business with the potential for financial loss or even criminal penalties for failure to comply. So far as is known, none of the present Executive have any qualifications or experience in running a business and it is possible that there are requirements BCA is unaware of. For example, the previous Treasurer was told by the Treasurer before him that BCA is not required to register for VAT, but the reason is not documented and a change in circumstances could invalidate it.

As a voluntary Association, BCA has no corporate status or limited liability. Any legal action would be against individuals, which is a disincentive to volunteer one's time and effort. Lack of corporate status is also difficult when setting up new suppliers or agents and providing verification.

**Likelihood:** Major failure low, minor infringement moderate.

**Consequence (unmitigated):** Major failure risks prosecution, minor failure incurs small cost

**Current mitigation:** None

**Other mitigation:** Corporate status, formal advice

**Recommendation:** Consider corporate status, clarify employer status, review any advice available from Sport and Recreation Alliance

## 2.10 Comparative risk

The table below provides a subjective summary of the significance of each risk, which may inform the priorities for action. Scores are calculated as probability times consequence.

Item	Probability	Consequence	Score	Comment
PL premium large rise	3	3	9	
Unclaimable event	1	4	4	
Data & IT	3	4	12	The largest vulnerability
Restrictions on caving	3	2	6	
Loss of banking	2	2	4	
Access legal action	2	2	4	
Loss or fraud	2	1	2	
Loss of key people	4	2	8	Significant risk
Legal non-compliance	2	3	6	

## 3.0 Summary and overall recommendations

### 3.1 Reserves

Further work is required on the potential increase in insurance premiums, but there is at present no evidence that a larger Insurance Reserve would be necessary, and the present target may be over-cautious.

A single reserve would be more practical than separate amounts for Insurance and General. It is unlikely that the full amount of both would be called upon simultaneously. The two current reserves, together, equal one year's turnover. Six months turnover would be at the high end of the recommendations for commercial business. BCA has an unusual risk profile with a single main source of income and an expenditure commitment that is outside our control and represents 65% of our turnover.

No events have been identified by this review that would require the full amount of the currently specified General Reserve, which is effectively 35% of turnover.

Setting a requirement for a total reserve equal to annual turnover has a perverse effect when membership fees are increased, as all the increased income is committed to the reserve and none is available for expenditure in the first year. The reserve should therefore be a target, which must be achievable with projected income, rather than a requirement to be met at all times.

Pending further information, BCA's target should be to retain a total Reserve of 75% of one year's turnover.

Reserves should be considered separately from funds for development of the organisation, for which there is currently no provision. A development fund, while outside the scope of this review, would provide an additional buffer for emergencies.

### **3.2 IT Recommendations**

Necessary measures to re-instate cyber insurance should be taken as soon as possible.

Access to the Google Workspace should require 2FA. Sensitive data must not be retained on individual devices. Consideration should be given to supplying BCA laptops to staff handling sensitive data and possibly to selected officers.

### **3.3 Legal status of BCA**

BCA must transition to a corporate form, probably to a Company Limited by Guarantee.

All other NGBs have some form of corporate status and limited liability. This would have several advantages, principally limitation of liability, verification of status in dealing with suppliers and removal of ambiguity over the legal status of BCA.

The disadvantages would be mainly the work involved in the transition. Registering a company is not expensive, but many commercial and financial arrangements would not be transferable and would need to be re-established. Many other associations have made this change and BCA should not be put off by the difficulties.

### **3.4 Formalisation of succession plans and deputisation**

BCA should document the skills overlaps among officers and staff to facilitate transfer of roles in an emergency. All officers should be encouraged to identify one or more potential successors or deputies.

An additional Executive role to shadow the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer might be valuable, perhaps given the title of Vice-Chair.

Chris Bolton  
Treasurer  
15 July 2025



## **Proposed Membership Fees for 2026 and 2027**

### **1.0 Why we need to increase fees**

BCA's budget for 2025 is for a deficit, that is, even with the increase this year we aren't covering our costs. We have also run our reserves down and need to build them back up. To minimise the deficit for 2025, we establish a budget system. This is now resulting in some doubt about whether projects that have only recently been identified can actually go ahead. A primary purpose of BCA when set up was to collect fees on behalf of constituent bodies such as Regional Councils. If they need money to develop caving in their region, BCA has to raise it for them.

### **2.0 How did we get here**

Reducing our reserves was the right thing to do at the time but turns out to have inbuilt momentum. Using the reserves to reduce membership fees resulted in an artificially low income that was less than our operational costs. Our General Reserve was based on that low turnover, so was lower than intended. In the first year after an increase, all the extra goes straight into reserves. It can therefore be two years from a decision to increase fees before the benefit is felt.

### **3.0 Insurance as a proportion of income**

From 2007-2018, the insurance premium was 35-30% of the membership fees. In 2024 it was 66%, and 2025 is 58%. This was partly as result of the fees being at a lower level than the overall running costs and partly because the public liability has had to be increased to £20M. It meant, however, that one of our reserves were down to minimum, only 42% was available for other activity. The proposed increase will bring proportion spent on insurance down to 46%.

### **4.0 Increased costs**

In the next year, we expect the insurance premium may rise by more than inflation, as it's been held down for 2 years by an agreement that has now expired. The rent for the British Caving Library has not been increased for some years and a significant rise is probably imminent. We are considering whether providing staff support to some of our Working Groups, as we do for QMC, may improve their effectiveness. It's likely that re-stocking of anchor bolts will be needed within 2 years.



We have identified a number of things that need to be done to improve effectiveness and reduce the risk to the viability of the Association. None are particularly expensive but we do need a Development Fund of £10-£20k so that we can balance normal operations and grants to constituent bodies against expected income but have some money available for improvements.

## 5.0 Comparisons

Adult membership of Paddle UK is now £60 for new members, £49 for renewals. For BMC it's £53.48 for renewals and £40.11 for new members. When BCA was founded in 2004, Direct Individual Membership was £32, the same as is now proposed.

## 6.0 What have we done to avoid an increase?

Apart from the budget rules we have applied for 2025, we have done a Business Risk Assessment to establish, among other things, how much we need to hold as reserve capital against unplanned events. Previously, our Insurance Reserve and General Reserve totalled one year's turnover. The review has concluded that a total of 0.75 one year's turnover is appropriate to cover all risks, which substantially reduces the amount needed to top up the reserves.

## 7.0 Conclusion

An increase in fees for 2026 is necessary. To provide stability, and to reassure members, there should be no further increase in 2027. The proposed rates are expected to be sufficient to ensure that after 2027, funding will be stable and increases will only be needed to cover inflation.

## 8.0 Proposed rates

Table 1 below shows the current rate, for 2025, with the proposed rate for 2026 and 2027 and percentage increase. The total increase from the rates for 2022-2024 is also shown.

	Current 2025	Proposed 2026 & 27	Increase 2025 to 2026/27
	£	£	
Caving Member	24	32	33%
Non-caving Member	8	10	25%
Student Member	10	12	20%
Club	36	44	22%
Hut/ACB	72	96	33%
Associate	25	36	44%

Table 2 (next page) shows the estimated increase in expenditure to meet needs (ie, without squeezing the budget) in 2026 and 2027, plus inflation at 3.5% for 2026 except where a specific change was identified, and a further 2.5% on all costs for 2027, based on Government forecasts. The bottom rows of the table show how the increased income translates into balanced operational costs and necessary reserves.

A short-term shortfall in reserves is considered acceptable provided the operating surplus is on track to remove it.

Chris Bolton  
Treasurer  
15 July 2025

	<b>Budget 2025</b>	<b>Change 2026</b>	<b>Forecast 2026</b>	<b>Comment for 2026 changes</b>	<b>Change 2027</b>	<b>Forecast 2027</b>
Derbyshire Caving Association	3820	0	3820		100	3920
Devon & Cornwall Underground Council	2300	-500	1800	2024 was high	100	1900
Council of Southern Caving Clubs	1080	1000	2080	2024 was low	100	2180
Council for the Northern Caving Community	5800	1000	6800	No contingencies	200	7000
Caving Wales / Ogof Cymru	1200	500	1700	2024 was low	100	1800
Conservation & Access WG	4900	1000	5900	CNCC estimated zero	200	6100
Equipment & Training WG	3100	1000	4100	More bolts?	1000	5100
Youth & Development WG	3600	200	3800		200	4000
Publications & Information WG	50	200	250	Some printing		250
Insurance premiums (7.5%)	78303	5900	84203	agreement expired 7.5%	4300	88503
Descent Magazine	2520		2520			2520
Ghar Parau Foundation	3000		3000			3000
British Caving Library	12000	3000	15000	rent increase expected		15000
Staff costs	13728	1200	14928	expanded roles 5%	1200	16128
Miscellaneous expenses	682	100	782		100	882
JustGo for membership	4580	200	4780		200	4980
IT Licences, servers, domains, etc	2700	100	2800		100	2900
IT Support	1050		1050			1050
QMS (Instructor Training & Certification)	19912	300	20212		300	20512
External memberships: SRA, UIS, FES etc	1223	100	1323		100	1423
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>165548</b>	<b>15300</b>	<b>180848</b>		<b>8300</b>	<b>189148</b>
<b>Income</b>						
Membership fees	134831	48077	182908		0	182908
QMS	20145	500	20645		500	21145
Interest	4645	-1200	3445		-900	2545
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>159621</b>		<b>206998</b>			<b>206598</b>
<b>Reserves at end of year</b>	<b>142908</b>		<b>136981</b>			<b>163131</b>
<b>Reserve surplus/shortfall</b>	<b>23192</b>		<b>-18268</b>	<b>target reduced</b>		<b>8183</b>
<b>Operating surplus/shortfall</b>	<b>-5927</b>		<b>26150</b>			<b>17450</b>
<b>Total surplus/shortfall</b>	<b>17265</b>		<b>7883</b>			<b>25633</b>

Table 2 – forecast income and expenditure 2026 and 2027 with proposed fees increases



# BCA Manual of Operations

## Explanatory Note

The manual of operations is a working document detailing the BCA's standard operating procedures. It is an advisory, not a binding document, of how the BCA should operate.

The BCA Secretary has the duty and the right to update the document to ensure it stays up to date. However, substantive changes should be brought to the BCA's National Council.

## Table of Contents

Explanatory Note.....	1
1. National Council .....	1
2. National Council Meeting Procedures.....	2
3. The Executive.....	3
4. Regional Caving Council and Associate Body Representatives.....	4
5. Working Groups.....	4
6. BCA Officers.....	5
7. General Meeting Procedures.....	5
8. Publishing A Document .....	7

## 1. National Council

- (1) Often referred to as [the] 'Council', the BCA's National Council is defined under Article 6 of the BCA Constitution.
- (2) The Nation Council is attended by:
  - (a) the Executive.
  - (b) 2 Group Member Representatives.
  - (c) 2 Individual Member representatives.
  - (d) A representative from each Regional Caving Council.
  - (e) A representative from National Caving Body.
  - (f) Working Group Convenors.
  - (g) Appointed BCA Officers.
  - (h) BCA Staff.

- (i) BCA Members who request the Executive to do so.

## **2. National Council Meeting Procedures**

- (1) The National Council must meet at least twice a year as per Article 6.11 of the [Constitution](#) but should aim to meet four times a year.
- (2) Meetings of the National council will ordinarily be scheduled to coincide with important constitutional and financial deadlines and to avoid dates and periods which will reduce the ability for members to attend e.g. religious holidays and major national caving events.
- (3) The dates for Council Meetings throughout the year will ordinarily be decided at the Council Meeting following the AGM and advertised in the minutes of that meeting.
- (4) Emergency Council meetings may be called by the Executive and may follow a contracted timeline. Such meeting should concern only those topics that are necessary to be dealt with immediately and otherwise cannot wait until the next scheduled Council meeting.
- (5) Council meetings may be held online or in-person at any suitable location in a multi-modal format to allow participants to also join remotely via video link.
- (6) Voting is by simple majority of those present and eligible to vote with no minimum number necessary for the meeting to be quorate.
- (7) The following persons shall be entitled to a vote:
  - (a) The Executive
  - (b) 2 Group Member Representatives.
  - (c) 2 Individual Member representatives.
  - (d) A representative from each Regional Caving Council.
  - (e) A representative from National Caving Body.
- (8) The Chair shall hold the casting vote. An individual is free to represent more than one Group, but nobody is entitled to more than one vote.
- (9) This is the recommended timeline ahead of Council Meetings:
  - (a) Six Weeks prior – the Secretary should request reports from the Executive, Working Group Convenors, Officers, and option reports from other Council members; as well as agenda items from Council members.
  - (b) Three Weeks Prior – the deadline for the submission of agenda items from Council members to the Secretary.
  - (c) Two weeks prior – the deadline for the submission of reports to the Secretary. The Secretary will then ensure the agenda and draft minutes from the last meeting are published on the website and advertised to Council and the caving community.
  - (d) At least one week prior – the Secretary will collate and ensure all reports are published on the website and advertised to Council and the caving community. Council members are expected to have read these reports prior to the meeting.
  - (e) No later than eight weeks following the meeting – the Secretary should ensure the draft minutes are published on the website and advertised to Council and the caving community.
- (10) As standard the Agenda for a Council Meeting will include:
  - (a) Welcome by the Chair & Apologies for Absence.

- (b) Acceptance of the Minutes of the previous meeting.
  - (c) Matters arising from the previous meeting including review of the action log.
  - (d) Officers' Reports, including the opportunity for questions/discussion.
  - (e) Items/proposals for discussion/voting submitted by BCA Council members.
  - (f) Any other business.
- (11) Any items for discussion which are not on the agenda should be declared no later than the start of the meeting and will be included under 'Any other Business' at the discretion of the Chair. There should be a good reason why the item was not included on the advanced agenda or in an appropriate report.
- (12) Reports should:
- (a) Update Council on developments/changes since the last Council meeting and include proposals for Council's consideration, including the necessary background and any recommendations of the author.
  - (b) Identify anything that may:
    - (i) Constitute a material change to the business and operation of the Officer, Working Group, body or representative.
    - (ii) Involve other Association groups or members.
    - (iii) Have legal implications for the Association.
    - (iv) Have financial implications for the Association beyond those already agreed.
    - (v) Involve the Association in a change to established policies or require the Association to agree a new policy or procedure.
- (13) Council Meeting Minutes should include:
- (a) Date, time and location.
  - (b) Details of those present.
  - (c) Apologies given for absence.
  - (d) Any matters arising from previous minutes.
  - (e) Outcomes of any actions from the previous meeting.
  - (f) Details of discussions regarding the reports including a record of their acceptance. The reports themselves may be attached or included within the minutes, or they may be included in a separate document available alongside the minutes.
  - (g) Details of discussions on specific issues, points raised, and decisions taken including, where appropriate, records of proposers, seconders, votes for and votes against.
  - (h) A means of indicating actions to be taken outside of the meeting, such as an action log; it is suggested to include this clearly at the end of the minutes.

### **3. The Executive**

- (1) The Executive shall be comprised of:
- (a) The Chair.
  - (b) The Secretary.
  - (c) The Treasurer.
  - (d) other Members as may be deemed necessary by the National Council to carry out the administrative business of the Association. See Article 6.14 of the Constitution.
- (2) The Executive officers will conduct the tasks specific to their roles while working in cohesion to guide the Association.

- (3) The Executive will make decisions by discussion and mutual agreement. Should a vote be necessary, it will be by simple majority with the Chair holding a casting vote.
- (4) The Executive shall:
  - (a) Manage the Association in the period between Council meetings.
  - (b) Shall guide the Association in terms of policy and goals, with the approval of the National Council.
  - (c) Make any urgent decisions, and subsequent actions, that may become necessary for the good of the Association
- (5) The Executive may call an Emergency General Meeting.
- (6) In the absence of an Executive member, the remaining members should aim to only decide on the most urgent, or non-controversial business. If a decision is necessary in a member's absence, then it should be dealt with by more than one Executive member and at least two other Council Members should be included in the decision-making process. It is recommended a record of these discussions is kept.
- (7) The Treasurer shall have the specific role as the convenor of the Finance Committee Working Group.

#### **4. Regional Caving Council and Associate Body Representatives**

- (1) Representatives are empowered to agree matters on behalf of the Body they represent, unless instructed specifically to the contrary by that Body.
- (2) Representatives who feel unable to express the view of the Body they represent should be given the chance to refer the matter back to their Body for clarification.
  - (a) The time given to refer a matter back must not be used as a delaying tactic.

#### **5. Working Groups**

- (1) Working Groups are established under Article 6.10 of the Constitution. They are set up by National Council, which should determine their Terms of Reference.
- (2) Each Working Group shall publish their Terms of Reference on the BCA website.
- (3) Working Groups are organised by the Working Group Convenor, an Officer appointed by National Council, who chairs the group.
- (4) Working Groups should report to National Council at each meeting and preferably send a representative to each National Council Meeting.
- (5) Working Groups should meet at least three times a year and provide minutes of these meetings to the Secretary.
- (6) The Convenor of the Working Group decides the membership of the group. Each group should aim for its membership to represent the interests of regional councils and constituent bodies, but this does not mean each body must have a direct representative in the group. Active volunteers, professionals, and experts are other classifications of person encouraged to be members of the group. Ultimately, the Convenor decides the membership of the group with the aim that the group operates to the best of its ability to achieve the specific business contained within their Terms of Reference.
- (7) The continued operation of:
  - (a) the Working Group,
  - (b) the Convenor,

(c) together with a review of their remit,

shall take place annually at the National Council meeting directly following the AGM.

## **6. BCA Officers**

- (1) At the Council meeting following the Annual general meeting the national council shall confirm the appointment of BCA officers.
- (2) The appointed officers usually include:
  - (a) The representative & deputy representative to the International Union of Speleology
  - (b) The representative & deputy representative to the European Speleological Federation
  - (c) British Caving Library Representative
  - (d) Safeguarding Officer
  - (e) Insurance Officer
- (3) The National Council may appoint or remove individuals to/from these roles as it sees fit.

## **7. General Meeting Procedures**

- (1) General Meetings are regulated under Article 7 of the Constitution.
- (2) An Annual General Meeting should be held in June each year or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter.
- (3) An Emergency General Meeting may be called by any 2 members of the Executive with an agenda and accompanying documents circulated no less than two weeks in advance.
- (4) Emergency General Meetings shall be limited to discussing only the subjects that gave rise to the emergency.
- (5) A Special General meeting may be called by:
  - (a) The Executive,
  - (b) National Council,
  - (c) 20 or more BCA members
- (6) The agenda and accompanying documents for a Special General Meeting must be circulated no less than 12 weeks in advance and the meeting shall be limited to discussing only the matter(s) that gave rise to the original request for the meeting.
- (7) The date, time, venue, and format of all General Meetings will be agreed on by the National Council.
- (8) National Council shall nominate a Chair and Recorder for the General Meeting. The General Meeting may elect a Chair or Recorder in their absence. Neither the Chair nor the Recorder shall be entitled to vote.
- (9) The time, date and venue, whether physical or teleconferencing, of an Annual or a Special General Meeting shall be published at least 18 weeks in advance of the meeting.
- (10) This is the recommended timeline ahead of Annual General Meetings:
  - (a) 18 Weeks before –
    - (i) the Secretary will publish the time, date, place, and format of the meeting.



- (ii) The Secretary will request and make BCA members aware of the deadline by which they must be notified of matters and proposals to be discussed at the AGM.
- (iii) The Secretary will advertise the roles and positions up for election
- (b) 84 Days (12 Weeks) –
  - (i) Deadline for notifying the Secretary of any matters and proposals, including all proposals for constitutional change to be discussed at the AGM. This will ideally coincide with a Council Meeting.
    - (1) Proposals do not need to be seconded until the AGM but finding a seconder before the AGM is recommended.
  - (ii) Deadline for receipt of nominations for positions up for election.
- (c) Council Meeting Preceding – National Council shall nominate a Chair and Recorder for the General Meeting. These are usually the Chair and the Secretary, respectively.
- (d) 6 weeks before – Secretary to circulate the agenda to the membership.
- (e) Two weeks before – Officers and Convenors and other Council Members to send written reports to the Secretary.
- (f) One week before – Secretary to publish the reports document for the meeting together with any other supporting documentation.
- (g) Up to 6 weeks after – Secretary to publish the draft minutes.
- (11) Agenda items may be submitted to a General Meeting by any Member of the Association (Group or Individual).
- (12) Anyone may attend and speak at a General Meeting.
- (13) The quorum for a General Meeting is 10 individual members who are eligible to vote.
- (14) The following items require voting:
  - (a) Appointment of Honorary Members and an Honorary President
  - (b) Accepting minutes, reports and other regular 'housekeeping' duties or matters arising that would not be considered 'motions' (50% majority of all votes required with no subsequent online voting).
  - (c) Submitted motions. It is suggested that before any voting occurs, those attending the meeting should debate any presented motions and, if necessary (and with the permission of the proposer), refine or consolidate them. The final motions must then receive the support of  $\geq 25\%$  of all individual members present and eligible to vote, or  $\geq 10$  individuals, whichever is lowest, to pass at the meeting. Motions passed at the meeting must then be progressed to an online ballot of all individual members.
- (15) Motions are items that would make any change to the constitution or involve taking a significant action or making a significant change to BCA operations, policy, procedure or position. They are expected to be submitted in advance on the agenda. In the event of uncertainty as to whether something should be a 'motion' or a 'housekeeping' matter, the Chair shall make the final decision, and the idea is that common sense should prevail here. The default position, in the event of indecision or dispute should be to consider the item a 'motion' and process accordingly.
- (16) The constitution states that 'uncontested candidates' for Council positions 'will be elected'. This wording was based on the pre-2019 status quo of

appointing unopposed candidates without a vote. This should therefore be the default interpretation.

- (17) It desirable for contested Council positions to be resolved at the meeting by mutual agreement between the candidates. The Chair is encouraged to facilitate discussions of this nature. However, if this is not possible, then the contested position and candidates will be progressed automatically to an online vote, in which it would be good practice to provide the candidates the opportunity to include a statement.
- (18) Online voting should be available to all BCA Individual Members for a 14-day period commencing as soon as is possible after the General Meeting. It is good practice to ensure this is well communicated to all members by email (if possible) and through the BCA website and social media. Motions will be passed by simple majority (50% support of all votes cast) or by a majority of 70% for changes to the constitution. For contested positions or multi-choice option motions, the candidate or option with the most support will be appointed/accepted.
- (19) For the purposes of all voting, abstentions are not considered a 'vote'.
- (20) Minutes of meetings should be prepared by the recorder and be distributed as soon as possible after the meeting. The draft minutes must be distributed within eight weeks of the AGM.
- (21) Draft minutes should be approved by at least two meeting attendees before publication. It is recommended that at least one of the approving attendees should be members of the executive.
- (22) General Meeting Minutes should include:
  - (a) Date, time and location.
  - (b) Details of those present.
  - (c) Apologies given for absence.
  - (d) Any matters arising from previous minutes.
  - (e) Outcomes of any actions from the previous meeting.
- (23) Draft minutes will be voted on at the following AGM.

## **8. Publishing A Document**

- (1) Documents containing new policies or changes to existing policies of the Association must be approved at an AGM as per item 7.11 of the Constitution.
- (2) Meeting minutes may be published automatically.
- (3) Officers should circulate the document they wish to publish to the Executive and National Council for comments with a sufficient timeframe to receive feedback before its publication.
- (4) Documents which are likely to be contentious should be brought to the National Council for approval. If an Officer or Working Group is unsure if a document is contentious, they should seek the advice of the Executive.

## **Notes for Council:**

Removed from the Manual of Operations:

- Finances page – purview of the Finance WG
- Complaints procedure – should be a separate document

- Disciplinary procedure - should be a separate document
- Policy Guide – not relevant. Explained under the Constitution and under a state of flux with the amendment that is being voted on following the AGM. Will be revisited and added in-line with the constitution following the vote.
- Officer Information pages – should be included under handover documentation. Unsuitable for this document.
- Working Group specific pages – these pages were blank or repetitive and any information should be in their Terms of Reference or included under handover documentation.

Policies & Docs to Create/Update:

- Media
- Privacy
- Complaints
- Disciplinary



## Anchor Working Group

### Terms of Reference 2025-26

This document specifies the remit and operation of the Working Group. It has been written in accordance with the BCA's Constitution and Manual of Operations. It has been reviewed by the BCA Executive and approved by the National Council on [INSERT DATE HERE].

#### **(1) Purpose**

- (a) To promote the interests of the British Caving Association, cavers, and the sport of caving, including exploratory and scientific endeavours.
- (b) To administer the BCA's Anchor policy
- (c) To research and expand the BCA's anchor scheme to enable a greater diversity of anchoring under the Anchor Scheme.
- (d) To promote the interests of conservation and safety in relation to anchors.

#### **(2) Membership**

- (a) The group will be convened and chaired by the Anchor Officer
- (b) Members will be invited by the convenor.
- (c) The working group will endeavour to ensure the interests of the BCA's Constituent Bodies and Regional Caving Councils are sufficiently represented where necessary.
- (d) Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis.

#### **(3) Accountability**

- (a) The Working Group's convenor will report to the BCA's National Council.
- (b) The Working Group will minute its meetings and publish these on the BCA website.
- (c) The Working Group's convenor will liaise with the BCA's Executive in the interim between National Council meetings.
- (d) An annual report detailing the working group's activities and strategic plan will be presented at the BCA's Annual General meeting.
- (e) The Working Group will have a budget agreed by the National Council and advised on by the Finance Working Group.
- (f) Complaints will be dealt with as per the BCA's complaints procedure and if necessary, brought to National Council.

#### **(4) Review**

- (a) The Working group's operation will be reviewed annually at the National Council meeting following the Annual general Meeting and

will consider, among other things, the verbal and written reports National Council has received, as well as the report presented to the membership at the Annual general meeting.

- (b) National Council may choose to review the working group at any time and amend these terms of reference and/or appoint a new officer to convene the group.

**(5) Methods**

- (a) The working group will hold official meetings at least thrice a year with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- (b) The convening officer will prepare the agenda for these meetings.
- (c) This section does not limit how the work is done, just how decisions are made.



# **Conservation and Access Working Group Terms of Reference 2025-26**

This document specifies the remit and operation of the Working Group. It has been written in accordance with the BCA's Constitution and Manual of Operations. It has been reviewed by the BCA Executive and approved by the National Council on **[INSERT DATE HERE]**.

## **(1) Purpose**

- (a) To promote the interests of the British Caving Association, cavers, and the sport of caving, including exploratory and scientific endeavours.
- (b) To work to assist Regional Caving Councils resolve issues concerning conservation and access in relation to caving and mine exploration.
- (c) To determine in accordance with the agreed funding arrangements which projects should be funded by the BCA in relation to works relating to the conservation of or enabling access to underground venues.
- (d) To promote the BCA's Countryside Rights of Way Act Policy.
- (e) To promote the BCA's Minimal Impact Caving Guidelines.

## **(2) Membership**

- (a) The group will be convened and chaired by the Conservation and Access Officer.
- (b) Members will be invited by the convenor.
- (c) The working group will endeavour to ensure the interests of the BCA's Constituent Bodies and Regional Caving Councils are sufficiently represented where necessary.
- (d) Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **(3) Accountability**

- (a) The Working Group's convenor will report to the BCA's National Council.
- (b) The Working Group will minute its meetings and publish these on the BCA website.
- (c) The Working Group's convenor will liaise with the BCA's Executive in the interim between National Council meetings.
- (d) An annual report detailing the working group's activities and strategic plan will be presented at the BCA's Annual General meeting.

- (e) The Working Group will have a budget agreed by the National Council and advised on by the Finance Working Group.
- (f) Complaints will be dealt with as per the BCA's complaints procedure and if necessary, brought to National Council.

#### **(4) Review**

- (a) The Working group's operation will be reviewed annually at the National Council meeting following the Annual general Meeting and will consider, among other things, the verbal and written reports National Council has received, as well as the report presented to the membership at the Annual general meeting.
- (b) National Council may choose to review the working group at any time and amend these terms of reference and/or appoint a new officer to convene the group.

#### **(5) Methods**

- (a) The working group will hold official meetings at least thrice a year with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- (b) The convening officer will prepare the agenda for these meetings.
- (c) This section does not limit how the work is done, just how decisions are made.



# **Finance Working Group Terms of Reference 2025-26**

This document specifies the remit and operation of the Working Group. It has been written in accordance with the BCA's Constitution and Manual of Operations. It has been reviewed by the BCA Executive and approved by the National Council on [INSERT DATE HERE].

## **(1) Purpose**

- (a) To promote the interests of the British Caving Association, cavers, and the sport of caving, including exploratory and scientific endeavours.
- (b) To assist the BCA Treasurer in the maintenance and review of the BCA's accounts.
- (c) To act in accordance with the BCA's Funding of Regional Councils document.
- (d) To periodically review the BCA's Business Risk Assessment document.
- (e) To advise the association regarding financial decisions to ensure the BCA has a sustainable future that facilitates the continuation of the BCA's current work and enables later strategic development.

## **(2) Membership**

- (a) The group will be convened and chaired by the BCA Treasurer.
- (b) Members will be invited by the convenor.
- (c) The working group will endeavour to ensure the interests of the BCA's Constituent Bodies and Regional Caving Councils are sufficiently represented where necessary.
- (d) Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **(3) Accountability**

- (a) The Working Group will report to the BCA's National Council via the BCA Treasurer.
- (b) The Working Group will minute its meetings and publish these on the BCA website.
- (c) The Working Group's convenor will liaise with the BCA's Executive in the interim between National Council meetings.
- (d) The Working Group will have a budget agreed by the National Council and advised on by the BCA Executive.
- (e) Complaints will be dealt with as per the BCA's complaints procedure and if necessary, brought to National Council.

## **(4) Review**



- (a) The Working group's operation will be reviewed annually at the National Council meeting following the Annual General Meeting and will consider, among other things, the verbal and written reports National Council has received, as well as the report presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) National Council may choose to review the working group at any time and amend these terms of reference and/or appoint a new officer to convene the group.

**(5) Methods**

- (a) The working group will hold official meetings at least thrice a year with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- (b) The convening officer will prepare the agenda for these meetings.
- (c) This section does not limit how the work is done, just how decisions are made.



# **National Access Working Group Terms of Reference 2025-26**

This document specifies the remit and operation of the Working Group. It has been written in accordance with the BCA's Constitution and Manual of Operations. It has been reviewed by the BCA Executive and approved by the National Council on [INSERT DATE HERE].

## **(1) Purpose**

- (a) To promote the interests of the British Caving Association, cavers, and the sport of caving, including exploratory and scientific endeavours.
- (b) To promote and lobby for broader land access rights on a national level in relation to caving.
- (c) To administer and review the BCA's Countryside Rights of Way Act Policy.

## **(2) Membership**

- (a) The group will be convened and chaired by the National Access Officer.
- (b) Members will be invited by the convenor.
- (c) The working group will endeavour to ensure the interests of the BCA's Constituent Bodies and Regional Caving Councils are sufficiently represented where necessary.
- (d) Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **(3) Accountability**

- (a) The Working Group's convenor will report to the BCA's National Council.
- (b) The Working Group will minute its meetings and publish these on the BCA website.
- (c) The Working Group's convenor will liaise with the BCA's Executive in the interim between National Council meetings.
- (d) An annual report detailing the working group's activities and strategic plan will be presented at the BCA's Annual General meeting.
- (e) The Working Group will have a budget agreed by the National Council and advised on by the Finance Working Group.
- (f) Complaints will be dealt with as per the BCA's complaints procedure and if necessary, brought to National Council.

## **(4) Review**

- (a) The Working group's operation will be reviewed annually at the National Council meeting following the Annual General Meeting and will consider, among other things, the verbal and written reports National Council has received, as well as the report presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) National Council may choose to review the working group at any time and amend these terms of reference and/or appoint a new officer to convene the group.

**(5) Methods**

- (a) The working group will hold official meetings at least thrice a year with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- (b) The convening officer will prepare the agenda for these meetings.
- (c) This section does not limit how the work is done, just how decisions are made.



# **Publications and Information Working Group Terms of Reference 2025-26**

This document specifies the remit and operation of the Working Group. It has been written in accordance with the BCA's Constitution and Manual of Operations. It has been reviewed by the BCA Executive and approved by the National Council on **[INSERT DATE HERE]**.

## **(1) Purpose**

- (a) To promote the interests of the British Caving Association, cavers, and the sport of caving, including exploratory and scientific endeavours.
- (b) To assist the BCA in its self-promotion, engagement with its members, and developing a clear media strategy.

## **(2) Membership**

- (a) The group will be convened and chaired by the Publications and Information Officer
- (b) Members will be invited by the convenor.
- (c) The working group will endeavour to ensure the interests of the BCA's Constituent Bodies and Regional Caving Councils are sufficiently represented where necessary.
- (d) Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **(3) Accountability**

- (a) The Working Group's convenor will report to the BCA's National Council.
- (b) The Working Group will minute its meetings and publish these on the BCA website.
- (c) The Working Group's convenor will liaise with the BCA's Executive in the interim between National Council meetings.
- (d) An annual report detailing the working group's activities and strategic plan will be presented at the BCA's Annual General meeting.
- (e) The Working Group will have a budget agreed by the National Council and advised on by the Finance Working Group.
- (f) Complaints will be dealt with as per the BCA's complaints procedure and if necessary, brought to National Council.

## **(4) Review**

- (a) The Working group's operation will be reviewed annually at the National Council meeting following the Annual general Meeting and will consider, among other things, the verbal and written reports National Council has received, as well as the report presented to the membership at the Annual general meeting.
- (b) National Council may choose to review the working group at any time and amend these terms of reference and/or appoint a new officer to convene the group.

**(5) Methods**

- (a) The working group will hold official meetings at least thrice a year with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- (b) The convening officer will prepare the agenda for these meetings.
- (c) This section does not limit how the work is done, just how decisions are made.



# **Qualifications Management Committee Working Group Terms of Reference 2025-26**

This document specifies the remit and operation of the Working Group. It has been written in accordance with the BCA's Constitution and Manual of Operations. It has been reviewed by the BCA Executive and approved by the National Council on [INSERT DATE HERE].

## **(1) Purpose**

- (a) To promote the interests of the British Caving Association, cavers, and the sport of caving, including exploratory and scientific endeavours.
- (b) To administer, develop, and review the BCA's instructed caving qualification schemes.

## **(2) Membership**

- (a) The group will be convened and chaired by the Qualifications Management Committee Chair.
- (b) Members will be invited by the convenor.
- (c) The working group will endeavour to ensure the interests of the BCA's Constituent Bodies and the professional panel regions are sufficiently represented where necessary.
- (d) Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **(3) Accountability**

- (a) The Working Group's convenor will report to the BCA's National Council.
- (b) The Working Group will minute its meetings and publish these on the BCA website.
- (c) The Working Group's convenor will liaise with the BCA's Executive in the interim between National Council meetings.
- (d) An annual report detailing the working group's activities and strategic plan will be presented at the BCA's Annual General meeting.
- (e) The Working Group will have a budget agreed by the National Council and advised on by the Finance Working Group.
- (f) Complaints will be dealt with as per the BCA's complaints procedure and if necessary, brought to National Council.

## **(4) Review**

- (a) The Working group's operation will be reviewed annually at the National Council meeting following the Annual General Meeting and will consider, among other things, the verbal and written reports National Council has received, as well as the report presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting.

- (b) National Council may choose to review the working group at any time and amend these terms of reference and/or appoint a new officer to convene the group.

**(5) Methods**

- (a) The working group will hold official meetings at least thrice a year with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- (b) The convening officer will prepare the agenda for these meetings.
- (c) This section does not limit how the work is done, just how decisions are made.



## **Training and Equipment Working Group**

### **Terms of Reference 2025-26**

This document specifies the remit and operation of the Working Group. It has been written in accordance with the BCA's Constitution and Manual of Operations. It has been reviewed by the BCA Executive and approved by the National Council on [INSERT DATE HERE].

#### **(1) Purpose**

- (a) To promote the interests of the British Caving Association, cavers, and the sport of caving, including exploratory and scientific endeavours.
- (b) To coordinate and facilitate recreational caving training.
- (c) To consider, discuss, and research the use of equipment within recreational caving.
- (d) To identify strategic weaknesses in recreational caving equipment and skills gaps and to work to resolve these matters.

#### **(2) Membership**

- (a) The group will be convened and chaired by Training and Equipment Officer
- (b) Members will be invited by the convenor.
- (c) The working group will endeavour to ensure the interests of the BCA's Constituent Bodies and Regional Caving Councils are sufficiently represented where necessary.
- (d) Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis.

#### **(3) Accountability**

- (a) The Working Group's convenor will report to the BCA's National Council.
- (b) The Working Group will minute its meetings and publish these on the BCA website.
- (c) The Working Group's convenor will liaise with the BCA's Executive in the interim between National Council meetings.
- (d) An annual report detailing the working group's activities and strategic plan will be presented at the BCA's Annual General Meeting.
- (e) The Working Group will have a budget agreed by the National Council and advised on by the Finance Working Group.



- (f) Complaints will be dealt with as per the BCA's complaints procedure and if necessary, brought to National Council.

#### **(4) Review**

- (a) The Working group's operation will be reviewed annually at the National Council meeting following the Annual General Meeting and will consider, among other things, the verbal and written reports National Council has received, as well as the report presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) National Council may choose to review the working group at any time and amend these terms of reference and/or appoint a new officer to convene the group.

#### **(5) Methods**

- (a) The working group will hold official meetings at least thrice a year with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- (b) The convening officer will prepare the agenda for these meetings.
- (c) This section does not limit how the work is done, just how decisions are made.



# **Youth and Development Working Group Terms of Reference 2025-26**

This document specifies the remit and operation of the Working Group. It has been written in accordance with the BCA's Constitution and Manual of Operations. It has been reviewed by the BCA Executive and approved by the National Council on [INSERT DATE HERE].

## **(1) Purpose**

- (a) To promote the interests of the British Caving Association, cavers, and the sport of caving, including exploratory and scientific endeavours.
- (b) To promote, represent, and support student caving clubs, youth groups, and student/young individuals undertake caving activities.
- (c) To support students and young people participate in caving.
- (d) To coordinate with and support other regional and national bodies in the provision of caving activities.

## **(2) Membership**

- (a) The group will be convened and chaired by the Youth & Development Officer.
- (b) Members will be invited by the convenor.
- (c) The working group will endeavour to ensure the interests of the BCA's Constituent Bodies and Regional Caving Councils are sufficiently represented where necessary.
- (d) Membership should be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **(3) Accountability**

- (a) The Working Group's convenor will report to the BCA's National Council.
- (b) The Working Group will minute its meetings and publish these on the BCA website.
- (c) The Working Group's convenor will liaise with the BCA's Executive in the interim between National Council meetings.
- (d) An annual report detailing the working group's activities and strategic plan will be presented at the BCA's Annual General meeting.
- (e) The Working Group will have a budget agreed by the National Council and advised on by the Finance Working Group.

- (f) Complaints will be dealt with as per the BCA's complaints procedure and if necessary, brought to National Council.

**(4) Review**

- (a) The Working group's operation will be reviewed annually at the National Council meeting following the Annual general Meeting and will consider, among other things, the verbal and written reports National Council has received, as well as the report presented to the membership at the Annual general meeting.
- (b) National Council may choose to review the working group at any time and amend these terms of reference and/or appoint a new officer to convene the group.

**(5) Methods**

- (a) The working group will hold official meetings at least thrice a year with regular discussions between members of the working group occurring in between.
- (b) The convening officer will prepare the agenda for these meetings.
- (c) This section does not limit how the work is done, just how decisions are made.