



Minutes for Council Meeting

Tuesday the 25th of November at 7pm

Held via Zoom

Agenda Item No.	Agenda Item Name
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	Acceptance of Reports
8	Matters arising from the previous Council Meeting
9	Items for Discussion
10	Any Other Business
11	Details of the Next Meeting

1.0 Apologies for Absence

David Jean, Tony Radmall, Pete Knight

2.0 Persons present

Aidan Kuhlmann, Chris Bolton, Rostam Namaghi, Andy Eavis, Linda Wilson, Todd Rye, Mike Higgins, George Plant, Peter Jackson, Simon Perkins, Victoria Kocher, Zac Woodford, Isaac Neale, Allan Richardson, Jenny Potts, Joshitha Shivkumar, John Gunn (joined at the end of the Chair's report).

George Plant left the meeting after his QMC report.

John Gunn and Andy Eavis left the meeting after John Gunn's UIS report.

Minutes compiled by Katie Eavis (not present at the meeting) from the Zoom recording.
No quorate number required.

3.0 Current Composition of the BCA Council

	Position	Name	Initials	Vote
BCA Executive	Chair (2024-27)	Rostam Namaghi	RN	N
	Treasurer (2024-27)	Chris Bolton	CJB	Y
	Secretary (2024-27)	Aidan Kuhlmann	AK	Y
Individual Members Representatives	Position 1 (2023-2025)	<i>Vacant</i>		
	Position 2 (2024-2026)	Andy Eavis	AE	Y
Group Member Representatives	Position 1 (2023-2025)	<i>Vacant</i>		
	Position 2 (2024-2026)	Jenny Potts	JP	Y
Regional Council Representatives	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
Constituent Body Representatives	Assoc. Caving Instructors	Stephan Natynczuk	SN	Y
	BCRA	John Gunn	JG	Y
	BCRC	Emma Porter	EP	Y
	CDG	Simon Perkins	SP	Y
	CHECC	Tom Phillips	TP	Y
	NAMHO	Peter Jackson	PJ	Y
	National Scout Caving Team	Tony Radmall	TR	Y
	William Pengelly CST	Richard Vooght	RV	Y
Working Group Convenors	Anchor	Pete Knight	PK	N
	Conservation & Access	Victoria Kocher	VK	N
	Finance	Chris Bolton	CJB	N
	Incorporation	Chris Bolton	CJB	N
	National Access	Rostam Namaghi	RN	N
	Publications & Information	Zac Woodford	ZW	N
	Qualification Management Committee	George Plant	GP	N
	Radon	<i>Dormant</i>		N
	Training & Equipment	Aidan Kuhlmann	AK	N
	Youth & Development	Isaac Neale	IN	N
Other Positions	BCL Representative	Jenny Potts	JP	N
	FSE Rep	Tom Phillips	TP	N
	Safeguarding Officer	Chris Boardman	CBD	N
	UIS Rep	John Gunn	JG	N
BCA Staff	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?	30/03	Report?	19/05	Report?	07/07	Report?
BCA Executive	Chair	RN	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y								
	Treasurer	CJB	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y								
	Secretary	AK	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y								
Members Representatives	Position 1		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A								
	Position 2	AE	N	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A								
Group Member Representatives	Position 1		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A								
	Position 2	JP	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A								
Regional Council Representatives N.B: Reports are optional	Ogofa Cymru	AR	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y								
	CNCC	TRY	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N								
	CSCC	LJW	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y								
	DCA	MH	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y								
	DCUC	DJ	Y	N	N	N	N	N								
Constituent Body Representatives N.B: Reports are optional	ACI	SN	Y	N	Y	N	N	N								
	BCRA	JG	N	N	Y	N	Y	N								
	BCRC	EP	N	N	N	N	N	N								
	CDG	SP	N	N	N	N	Y	N								
	CHECC	TP	N	N	Y	N	N	N								
	NAMHO	SH/PJ	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N								
	NCSASU	TR	Y	N	Y	N	N	N								
Working Group Convenors	WP CST	RV	Y	N	N	N	N	N								
	Anchor	PK	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N	Y								
	C&A	VK	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y								
	Finance	CJB	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A								
	Incorporation	CJB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y								
	National Access		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y								
	P&I	ZW	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y								
	QMC	GP	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y								
	(Dormant) Radon		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A								
Other Positions	T&E		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A								
	Y&D	IN	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y								
	BCL Rep.	JP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y								
	FSE Rep	TP	N	Y	Y	N	N	N								
	Insurance		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A								
	Newsletter		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A								
	Safeguarding	CBD	Y	N	Y	N	N	N								
	UIS Rep.	JG	N	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y								
	BCA Admin	KE	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	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 states that a few typos have been corrected and a minor change made at the end of CJB's comments on incorporation, as requested by CJB.

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

Proposer: Aidan Kuhlmann **Seconders:** Linda Wilson

Abstentions: SP, TRY, AE,

For: AK, LJW, JP, AR, PJ, MH, CJB,

Against: None

Motion passed.

6.0 Officer Reports

6.1

Executive

6.1.1

Chair (Rostam Namaghi)

Dowbergill

I think it's safe to say that BCA Council members still go caving.

I have to say a very big thank you to Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association. As some of you may be aware I was one of the three cavers rescued in Dowbergill last month. It was not the way I intended on bringing the caving community together. It was incredibly humbling to see so many people turn up to help out, really driving home the point of why we all volunteer – this is a very big family. Of course I've donated to UWFRA and I'm working on my beer barrel debt, and I shall try my best not to cause any national news in the near future.

Northern Ireland

The most significant event in my role since the last meeting has been the uncovering of fraud perpetrated by Liam McCarthy. He was a man, originally from Skipton, who had been convicted of fraud and imprisoned twice previously. The police are involved, and he has been arrested.

It is unclear how much money has been lost – he was the Ulster club's treasurer and had applied for grants from various organisations. It has been devastating for the Ulster cavers, who have voted to wind up the club and some of whom will likely start anew. I spoke to Raymond Bell (one of the prominent members of the club) and have been following up (alongside SUI) to make sure that the cavers are getting the support they need. I can't emphasise how traumatic it has been and I will continue to follow up.

It was uncovered, from our perspective, following a meeting between the SUI, myself and QMC (George Plant and Richard Hill). The aim of this was to co-ordinate equivalence between awards and it was highlighted how we potentially had a gap of governance over Northern Ireland. A few names were discussed and following the meeting it was discovered that there were forged certificates.

The organizational learning points so far:

- I emailed the membership secretary to cancel the membership of the member effective immediately. This had not been done before and we do not have a procedure for it – this is something that we should carefully consider adding to the MoO. It needs to be an Executive power that has an effective check and balance.*
- QMC and SUI will be working on equivalence between awards and certificate checking going forward. The SUI have made some funding available for this.*
- It feels like the support we are able to provide is limited – I was able to signpost for professional support and offered to help with documentation on setting up a new club. Some feedback and reflection on this would be useful.*

National Access

We will have had a meeting by the time of the council meeting and I hope to add the outcome of this. I am afraid we should be quietly pessimistic for the time being – political events have caused the government to prioritise other issues and the surprising lack of stability given the majority they have means that any access bill is likely to be in the latter stage of any parliament. In the interim we should prepare both who we lobby and how we lobby – particularly looking at engaging the membership on this issue.

Other Actions

I have yet to find a suitable convener for the T&E working group and this will be my priority going into the new year.

We so far have had no volunteers from regional councils regarding a BCA AGM party weekend – if we have no volunteers, I will start approaching individuals as time is stealing a march and suitable venue finding may already be tricky.

Lastly, I am still very keen to host a BCA working weekend at a club hut – what would the appetite be for this from Council members?

Dowbergill

RN thanked the rescue teams involved again.

Northern Ireland

RN summarised the fraud that has been perpetrated against the Ulster SSCC by Liam McCarthy and mentioned it is worth caving organisations checking any grants etc that they may have awarded to Liam or Ulster SSCC. RN and BCA have been supporting USSCC members. LW asks if this issue can be discussed outside of the meeting. RN confirmed it can be mentioned and might be beneficial to caving to raise awareness.

National Access

It is likely RN and David Rose will give a short presentation to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Access at some point in January. CJB added that DEFRA changing their view on whether CRoW applies to caving doesn't require legislation, just the political will. RN is keen to focus on protecting landowners from liability.

BCA AGM

RN thanked JP and DCA for the offer to host the BCA AGM 2026. JP explained the DCA proposal: Hold the BCA AGM in the Peak District, on the morning of Sunday the 28th of June utilising Monyash Village Hall. The hall can also be used for talks on the Saturday evening. The Orpheus is nearby for caving accommodation. TSG is also not too far away. The library could be open for visits and there is plenty of caving nearby.

6.1.2 Treasurer (Chris Bolton)

The major item in my report for this meeting is the draft budget, Appendix 1. Some numbers outside BCA's control are still provisional, so my intention is that this meeting will be for discussion, and I will table a final version in January for approval.

I have aligned the categories in Regional Council budgets, and hence their claims, with the topics of relevant Working Groups. That is, T&E, Anchors, and C&A (split into

routine and project). I'd appreciate Council's opinion on which WG survey gear falls under.

The deficit for 2025 looks smaller than expected as some C&A projects are dropping back to 2026. FODCCAG may have a requirement but are not communicating via CW.

The CSCC Treasurer advised me last year that about 4 years ago, their then C&A officer gained approval for work costing about £5000. The work, or most of it, was carried out, and was initially paid for by either the officer or their club. Despite prompting, CSCC have received no claim or confirmation of the amount. CSCC do not think it likely, but they believe they would be obliged to reimburse any claim submitted within 6 years of the expenditure. The guidance on BCA Funding of Regional Councils, however, states "All actual claims values are to be submitted by 31 December following the year of expenditure. BCA will be under no obligation to fund claims which are not submitted within this timescale." In this case the issue is outside the control of CSCC itself so I anticipate that BCA could reimburse CSCC, subject to BCA funds being adequate, if and when a claim supported by adequate evidence of the expenditure is made. I made no provision in the 2024 accounts or 2025 budget, as accruals should only be made against confirmed debts. I have, however, included £5000 at 10% probability in the 2026 budget. I ask Council to endorse this provisional approach, without commitment.

CSCC have also asked whether BCA's IT could host a server for one of their members who has written an App to enable logging and sharing of trip reports. The cost is unstated but 'low' and a proposal is awaited. What is Council's reaction and would this belong under any WG?

For good accounting practice, and to enable the cost of things like a batch of IC anchors to be spread over several years, I intend to include physical assets on the balance sheet in future. If anyone is aware of any BCA property, either held by BCA or others such as Regional Councils, please let me know.

I have made some progress on incorporated status and made a report to the Incorporation WG. We are establishing which aspects are important and how to manage them. There is nothing for Council to discuss at present. My report to the September meeting of Council contained an error; it is not legally necessary for Directors to be elected by the members of a company, so all Council members could be Directors if considered appropriate.

I have also been assisting Katie with the Insurance Renewal and getting our IT into condition for renewal of the cyber insurance.

There is one item I ask Council to vote on. Our Constitution states "The National Council may by specific resolution authorise other suitable organisations to collect some or all of its subscriptions and or other income". JustGo collect our fees and we should formalise this.

Motion: To authorise JustGo to collect membership fees on behalf of BCA and BCRA.

CJB gave some details about the CSCC historic funding issue mentioned in his report. If CSCC ring fence this amount, in case they are asked to pay it, they will end up without the funds needed for day-to-day activities. CJB suggested Council agrees to change the default timescale in this case. If this claim does materialize within the 6-year legal limit there will be an understanding in place that Council is very likely to agree to pay it.

This will not be a motion to vote independently on at this meeting, as the claim may never appear and a binding decision to pay would cause accounting issues. However, by voting to accept the Officers' Reports Council are indicating they intend to agree to make the payment, should a claim ever be made.

CJB stated he has asked Regional Councils to put their budgets in the same categories as Working Groups because it helps with reporting back to the membership. It was accepted that surveying gear would be under Training and Equipment.

CJB stated DCA and CNCC have got back to him with locations/contents to add to the BCA insurance. It is in BCA's interests to add this to the insurance as BCA will have funded some of it and would help fund replacements if needed. CJB asked that if anyone is aware of BCA property or Regional Council assets being held anywhere else, that they please get in touch with him.

CJB reported that progress is being made on the incorporation.

As part of the insurance renewal process, the BCA has negotiated with Howden to be charged a fixed fee for broking for 2026, rather than a commission. This should save the BCA a significant sum and hopefully lower the spending on insurance to just under half the income. CJB will have the exact numbers for the January meeting.

CJB stated a budget still needs to be confirmed for the Training and Equipment and Anchor working groups. National Access have asked for £500 for travel costs.

CJB has itemized how much the BCA expects to spend on BCA staff in 2026, including the expense of providing BCA funded staff as a separate item in the budget. There is also an item for the payroll cost, now it is being done by an independent company.

Hopefully, the budget will show a surplus next year. The size of the surplus depends on how much is actually spent by the Regional Councils and Working Groups.

CJB asked Council to have a look at the budget, so they can approve the direction BCA are going in. CJB hopes to have it finalised for the January meeting.

Motion: To authorise JustGo to collect membership fees on behalf of BCA and BCRA.

Proposer: Chris Bolton, **Seconder:** Jenny Potts

Abstentions: None

For: AK, LJW, JP, PJ, MH, CJB, SP, TRY, AE, AR, JG

Against: None

Motion passed.

6.1.3 Secretary (Aidan Kuhlmann)

I started writing this report thinking that I had very little report, but after reviewing my emails I discovered that this was very much not the case.

Since last meeting the CDG has informed me that Simon Perkins will be their new representative to BCA Council, and I look forward to seeing an active CDG presence in Council Meetings. Furthermore, Peter Jackson will be continuing to represent NAMHO.

Immediately after the last meeting we had Hidden Earth. The event went very well and from a BCA perspective we produced a stand for the event for the first time in a few years. Zac gathered from the BCA staff and some BCA officers some fact-file type information sheets on some of the BCA officers and what they do and I believe this is a good first step in the right direction. Katie also brought some of the older BCA banners. Before the event I struggled with a lack of creative direction of what form the stand should take but at Hidden Earth I gained a much better idea of what I would like it to look like going forwards. Zac, Chris, and I chatted a lot about what we should do for next year and we have made some plans for an improved stand in the future. Nevertheless, I think the BCA stand was well received and I believe that it was worthwhile. I also put together some rather unfashionable t-shirts for the BCA executive to wear at the event, and I believe that while a tad cringey they worked well to make us more identifiable to cavers and I certainly had more conversations with cavers who I had not met before about BCA work than last year. The efforts to increase the BCA's visibility to the lay-caver is ongoing and is an issue I intend to keep working on.

My work with the different working groups continues to be active and very varied. I have remained involved in the Anchor WG and I am excited for what they will achieve, having read the agenda for their upcoming meeting. The Training and Equipment Working Group is still in need of a Convenor, but in the interim Rostam and I will remain as co-convenors. The next meeting will be on the 10th of December, and I have received notice of a few standards changes and technical notices which I will be including on their agenda. Simon Mullens has also produced a draft webpage which will be shown to the WG which will facilitate better digital advertising of regions training events, providing a central page for all RCC's training. This is currently very much a work-in-progress and subject to approval by the Working Group. Additionally, I have worked with Zac regarding the ongoing Student Caving Handbook which continues to make steady progress.

Furthermore, I have been working alongside Y&D and CHECC in relation to assisting the new STUCC club whom I have serendipitously bumped into a few times now and been able to assist in making sure the BCA has a coordinated support network for them as well as offering some advice, having found myself in a not too dissimilar position to theirs a few years ago in regards to Bangor SCC. I also attended CHECC which I believe ran incredibly well this year and there I provided training and attended the AGM and delegates meeting where Isaac, Tom, and I discussed with the clubs the recent meeting with Organised Fun and how we would like clubs to

move forward following on from it. I believe everyone is now thoroughly on the same page and it was wonderful to again see the community, collaboration, and support CHECC continues to provide, both as an organisation and as a network. It must be noted that I am able to report on this, while Isaac is not, because I am able to edit my report following the deadline other Officers are subject to.

I have also liaised with QMC, passing on emails from members requesting a LCMLA Trainer/Assessor section for Scotland as well as logos for LCMLA award holders. I also attended the start of the last QMC meeting and consequently they have finished producing the terms of reference that is included in the motion below.

The Manul of Operations has now been added to the BCA website as its own webpage – increasing its accessibility and visibility – and I have also been active working to add more banner pictures to pages to improve the aesthetics of the site. Behind the scenes, I have also conducted a large cleanup of the organisation of media and downloadable files on the site, reorganising the categories and tags for these items so that the site runs smoother and is easier to administer. If anyone has any high-resolution widescreen images which would suit a particular page on the BCA website and would be willing to share them, then please email me and I will credit the photographer if they are used. It is on my action list to create a guide for BCA staff and other editors of the website how to upload files so that it all stays organised going forward.

As part of my work with the Working groups I have decided on a procedure for their minutes after discussing with a few of the working groups. This is that minutes will be circulated with a 2-week period in which amendments can be raised by members, after which the minutes are approved and uploaded to the BCA website if no amendments are raised. Else, the amendments will be considered by the group and made by the convenor and then re-circulated. This will ordinarily allow the quick approval and publication of minutes, allowing working groups to not become tied down by bureaucracy. I intend to update the Manual of Operations to include this change – I do not feel it is needed to be voted on by Council, but if Council does disagree with this then I will of course defer to Council. It should be noted that the wording above will not be the exact wording which will be used.

Katie Eavis is now writing up most Working Group's minutes and my intention is that Katie will also takeover writing most Council Meeting's minutes as well. These minutes will be reviewed by me or the convenor since Katie is writing the minutes from the Zoom recordings. I have assisted Katie in taking on this work, providing templates, agendas, and other resources, as well as reviewing these minutes. The idea behind this change has been to free up volunteer time on what can be a dull and bureaucratic endeavour. Minutes are very important for transparency and record keeping, but they can be onerous to produce. The hope is that with Katie doing this work, minutes will be published faster and more consistently by all areas of the BCA, as well as leaving our volunteer officers more time to work on moving the work of their Working Groups forward, rather than draining their enthusiasm with house-keeping tasks.

In terms of other miscellaneous work, the BCA was invited to attend the launch of the Dales Countryside Museum's new caving exhibition. Unfortunately, the executive was all unable to attend but Andrew Hinde was able to attend in our place. The Campaign for National Parks also published their Parks in the Dark leaflet which was put together by Aila Taylor and advertised across BCA media. I mention it here both because I was the author for the North Wales section but also because it was great to see that cavers are working to promote our sport with large national bodies like CNP – improving our visibility with bodies like this that will not only promote caving to the public and assist on the growth of the sport, but also assist in our efforts in other areas, such as the work of the National Access Working Group. On this note, I attended the last Sports and Recreation Alliance's meeting alongside Chris Bolton.

Finally, I have also worked with Simon Mullens and Chris Bolton in regard to the BCA's email infrastructure as we work to improve our digital security and better organise our IT infrastructure.

My current to-do list includes:

- *Disciplinary Procedure (how this is displayed on the website)*
- *Media Policy*
- *Privacy Policy*
- *Complaints Procedure*
- *Privacy Policy*
- *Website How To documents*

Since writing his report AK reported he had been involved in the insurance renegotiation with CJB and KE. Additionally, he has been going back through the Health and Safety policies, which will hopefully be ready by the next Council Meeting.

AK states he will edit the Manual of Operations to reflect how working groups are approving their minutes. Minutes should be written up and circulated for a 2-week period for members to raise any issues. If no issues are received the minutes are approved. Otherwise, the convenor needs to approve the changes and re-circulate for comment.

CJB stated it would be helpful to be able to confirm to the insurers that BCA have recently reviewed the Health and Safety etc policies. CJB suggests Council vote to allow the BCA exec to approve these policies without waiting for a Council Meeting.

Motion: Council agrees to delegate the approval of administrative policies as required for the insurance renewal to the BCA executive

Proposer: Chris Bolton, **Seconder:** Aidan Kuhlmann

Abstentions: None

For: AK, LJW, JP, PJ, MH, CJB, SP, TRY, AE, AR, JG

Against: None

Motion passed.

RN stated he liked his HE t-shirt and that they worked well for HE. AK would like to have more resources for future events and plans to take BCA to more events such as NAMHO. He will liaise with RN, ZW, JP, and CJB on this.

6.2 Regional Council & Representative Body Reports (Optional)

6.2.1 CNCC (Todd Rye)

No report received.

TRY stated there are various things happening in the Dales: two winch meets next year, the Red Rose Easegill Open House, and NAMHO in Swaledale. Additionally, there is a revival going on at Lancaster University for their caving club.

The access officer is working on some access issues with landowners in Littondale. Hopefully he will have a more conclusive update soon. The training program is still going well with training getting booked up quickly.

RN commented on the reformation of LUCC and how previously other well established university clubs were well placed to support the new ones and suggested the CNCC help LUCC by introducing them to other northern university clubs.

6.2.2 CSCC (Linda Wilson & Joshitha Shivkumar)

Access & Conservation matters:

Longleat

The big news on the C&A front is that the agreement with the Longleat Estate for access to Gough's Cave, Reservoir Hole and Spider Hole has been signed and conservation warden training is well underway, and the first trips have now taken place.

A range of online facilities has been created including a user agreement/permit system, a trip reporting system and a booking calendar.

Eastwater

The Gladman's and Lolly Pot in Eastwater Cavern anchors have been installed. Gladman's only has one anchor on the main hang. With good rigging practice this can be rigged safely using the two anchors further back. The remains of the original spit is probably removable and it is the aim to do so in the future.

Stock Hill Mine Cave

A standard CSCC padlock has been installed and the CSCC Access Guide has been updated to reflect the change. Those wishing to visit the cave may wish to wait for the description and survey to be published in the upcoming Mendip Underground 6. The gate will require replacement at some stage.

Wookey Hole

The electron ladder on the 4th rift climb, on the dry route to Wookey 24, has broken. It was in a poor condition with a lot of visible corrosion. It has been replaced by a new one kindly donated by the Wessex Cave Club.

Stainsby's Shaft

Several reports were received that the Stainsby's Shaft lid had been broken into. The gate was repaired immediately by the MCG and I inspected it a few days later. The repair is excellent and there is no further work required.

Harridge Woods

The Harridge Wood Nature Reserve access agreement is ready to go but is waiting for the CSCC to complete the work required to provide an online permit system.

Charterhouse Cave

Anchor have been placed on Jet Pitch, with the original spit being removed and the placement reused. An anchor has already been added to the rope climb before the pitch. The original anchor is a through bolt unfortunately, so it has been left to form a double anchor.

Spider Hole

A request for anchors has been approved.

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/>.

Comms

Our comms officer, Peter Burgess, produces a newsletter after each CSCC meeting. If you would like to be added to the circulation list, please let me know.

BCA Matters

BCA was thanked for their robust and pragmatic approach to the issues presented by an organisation named Organised Fun who are acting as a consult on outdoor safety to a number of Students Unions. This potentially affects student caving clubs. BCA's championing of peer-to-peer training is very much welcomed by CSCC clubs.

LJW added that the first trips in a long time have taken place in Reservoir Hole and it is great to have that up and running.

6.2.3 DCA (Mike Higgins) 1:18

DCA Council met at the British Caving Library on Saturday 1st November. The advert in Descent for an Equipment Officer had born fruit and at the meeting Josie Skirrow was appointed to the vacant post. Not only that but we now also have an Assistant Equipment Officer to which post Ollie Oddie has been appointed. Pete Knight has consequently returned to his favoured post as Projects Officer and 2026 should now see things moving forward in that area of DCA's work. Some discussion took place on the continuing hiatus in training activities, with the Training Officer role now vacant again, and so the post of Training Coordinator was created, to which Nigel Berry was appointed.

A report on radon testing was considered, and it was agreed that DCA should move forward with this. A detailed report identifying appropriate locations and the number

of monitors required is to be prepared and submitted to the next meeting on 7th March 2026 with a view to the work being carried out during the Summer.

DCA's proposed projects at Suicide Cave and the newly discovered workings on Faucet Rake have been agreed by the landowner and should take place in 2026. It is hoped that the long-awaited gate for Wapping Mine will be made and fitted in the near future now that a volunteer for this job has come forward.

RN thanked DCA for volunteering to host the BCA AGM/ party weekend. MH said it was all JP's idea but the rest of DCA are enthusiastically behind it.

MH reported that the advert in Descent for a new equipment officer was so successful they have ended up with two people for the role! These are Josie Skirrow and Olly Oddie.

AK requested MH to send him Nigel Berry's email address so he can be added to the Training & Equipment working group, as the new DCA Training Coordinator.

DCA have been considering resuming radon testing next year. DCA will probably use their own resources to fund 2026 but may approach BCA about funds for 2027. JG offered some advice about radon meters and the difficulties in interpreting them. At this point there was a lot of discussion between JG, RN and AK about radon regarding the need to raise awareness amongst cavers, what to be testing, whether to re-open the working group, care needed when reporting radon and the risk of causing concern among landowners etc.

6.2.4 Caving Wales (Allan Richardson)

After a very dry summer water levels in S. Wales caves are back to normal for the time of year.

A water level of 2.4 meters was recorded in the OFD 1 streamway at 2000 on the 4th of November.

The DYO telemetry service (<https://linetop.co.uk/dyo>) has been running since the summer, providing near-live water depth from Lake 3 (where it floods to the roof first) and local rainfall hourly. This is mentioned in the current issue of Descent. The biggest wettest storm of the winter so far is expected on the 14th of November.

The DYO resurvey project kicked off with its inaugural meeting on the 8th of November, this was held at DYO Show Caves. Caving Wales is supporting the project with the purchase of survey equipment.

Discussions are ongoing on the Caving Wales Forest of Dean split.

NRW update from Stuart France

Since the Dartmoor case, the NRW has shifted its focus on to people involved with the administration of caving rather promoting its arguments that individual cavers don't enjoy statutory access rights. Their new mission revolves around SSSI compliance where NRW is now trying to posit caving organisations, and this applies to some clubs as well, as "Occupiers" so they fall within the ambit of the Wildlife and Countryside Act as modified by Schedule 9 of the CROW Act, and thus amenable to

prosecution. Clearly, they are not Occupiers since they are not in "day-to-day control of premises" in the way that tenant farmers and tenant pub landlords clearly are, and in the case of caving there is no agreement with the landowner executed as a Deed to evidence such. I told NRW informally their interpretation of Occupier was unlawful and if they made a legal decision based on it then this would be grounds for Judicial Review because it conflicts with case law since the 1960s, and their response was "well we might just do it anyway".

AR added to his report that he has been speaking to Paul Taylor about the Forest of Dean spilt from Caving Wales but has nothing on paper yet. Caving Wales are happy to support the Forest of Dean in setting up their own regional body but would need an AGM or EGM to make it official. RN suggested he approaches the Forest of Dean and asks them to bring a proposal to BCA Council. AR confirmed Caving Wales would be happy with that. CJB said from a budgeting point of view it would be helpful in the future if BCA could approach the Forest of Dean directly about their upcoming spends.

6.2.5 DCUC (David Jean)

No report received.

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.3 Working Group Convenor Reports

6.3.1 Anchor (Pete Knight)

Firstly, please accept my apologies but I do not expect to be back from work in time to attend this council meeting.

Since Aidan delivered the last update on AWG business to Council there has not been another meeting of the group. The next meeting will take place on the 1st of December 2025, and it will be my first as convenor.

Our aim for the next meeting is to establish a standing agenda of items to discuss and begin to work on forming sub-groups to tackle various topics. I'd like our normal scheduled meetings to be agile and short and save the more in-depth conversations about certain topics for specific meetings set up to move those items forward. Our potential list of topics is quite large and far reaching, so there is danger of running out of time to discuss important matters properly if we only meet every 4 months. The topics we hope to start addressing are:

- *Updating the BCA Anchor Policy*
- *Central publication on the BCA website of as much historic and contemporary testing data as we can accrue.*
- *Creating a guidance document for conducting future test bed installations.*
- *How we will go about approving BCA anchors for use in non-karst rock types in areas such as North Wales or Cornwall.*
- *Creating a guidance document for the removal of old Spits, expansion anchors, DMM Eco, PECO, IC and BP anchors in the field in future.*
- *Whether the AWG wishes to also include the placement of fixed aids like ladders, staples and pull-through chain setups in our terms of reference.*

I would welcome any guidance from Council as to what level of detail you wish to have reported to you regarding the work of the AWG beyond what will be published in the meeting minutes. I don't expect to attend all BCA Council meetings due to a busy work and volunteer schedule already, but I of course want to keep Council apprised of progress and be open to questions and directions from its members regarding our work.

If Council has a specific question or direction for the AWG or myself that you would like to be addressed at the upcoming Council meeting, please contact me by email and I will endeavour to send a written reply before the meeting takes place in case, I am unable to attend in person.

As agreed with the BCA Treasurer, the AWG has an estimated annual budget set as follows:

100% likelihood of up to £200 expenditure

50% likelihood of up to a further £200 expenditure

10% likelihood of up to a further £1000 expenditure

This is a very rough estimate but has at least given the Treasurer an indication for BCA budget management.

As agreed with the BCA Secretary, the draft minutes of future AWG meetings will be circulated to its members for comment as soon as possible after the close of the meeting. After 2 weeks and any suggested adjustments have been made, we will automatically approve the minutes and pass them to the BCA Sec for publication on the BCA website and distribution to Council members.

RN thanks PK for good report with sensible goals. CJB mentioned the percentage risk of expenditure seems to be working well for the regions.

6.3.2 Conservation & Access (Victoria Kocher)

The Conservation & Access Group met on 17 September to review ongoing regional work and key issues affecting cave conservation and access across the UK. The meeting highlighted significant progress in conservation projects, infrastructure repairs, and collaboration with landowners and statutory bodies.

Regional Conservation Highlights

Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC)

- *Major conservation grant secured: £2,000 from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, with match funding from CNCC. Projects include stile repairs at Long Churn, graffiti removal at Yordas Cave, shaft-top repairs at Aquamole Pot, fencing repairs at Sweetwater Hole, rubbish removal at Pasturegill, and entrance work at Fume Pot.*
- *Recent works completed: Graffiti cleaning, entrance/shaft stabilisation, fencing repairs, and archaeological site restoration.*

- *Archaeology coordination improved: Tony Brown appointed as Archaeology Coordinator.*
- *Planning response submitted: Objection lodged against quarry extension affecting Keldheads Cave.*
- *Livestock incident: A cow fell into an old dig—CNCC backfilled the feature; insurance advice being sought.*

Caving Wales (CW)

- *Graffiti response: Slate-mine vandalism addressed by recommending slate-dust covering rather than gating.*
- *Survey project: Multi-club re-survey of Dan yr Ogof underway with landowner support.*
- *Bolting work: SWCC continuing BCA-approved bolting programme in OFD.*
- *Access issues: Ongoing discussions regarding Ogof y Ci access and NRW concerns regarding Ogof Draenen's fifth entrance.*

Council of Southern Caving Clubs (CSCC)

- *Major access agreement: Longleat Estates access agreement ready for signing.*
- *Recent conservation work: Stabilisation of a hazardous boulder at Thrupe Lane, replacement of traverse rope at Waterwheel Swallet, rediscovery and assessment of Rickford Farm Cave.*
- *Infrastructure improvements: New lids required at several sites, with anticipated costs of £3–4k next year.*
- *Handovers: Stockhill Mine to be transferred from diggers to CSCC.*

Derbyshire Caving Association (DCA)

- *Major site work: Ongoing conservation and infrastructure work at Great Masson Mine; owners request improvements to multiple cave entrances and lids.*

Other Key Points

- *FoDCCAG & Funding: Clarification and discussion surrounding funding routes and reimbursement processes; FoDCCAG confirmed they did not intend to bypass CW.*
- *Natural England: Group agreed consents are obtained when necessary; potential invitation to NE representative to improve communication.*
- *International engagement: Proposal to strengthen links with UIS and international cave protection bodies to promote UK conservation work.*

I have attended Hidden Earth this year. It was a pleasure to see the involvement with conservation within the different regions. It is clear this is a very active year for cave

discovery, and my hopes are to get a clear picture of how BCA can support projects moving forward.

RN commented it was nice to see a big, detailed report from Conservation & Access. VK stated the recent meeting was well attended.

As already discussed at the meeting, VK said she is looking forward to clarity over the Caving Wales/Forest of Dean situation. It is anticipated that the Forest of Dean will have quite a few projects coming up considering recent discoveries.

6.3.3 Finance (BCA Treasurer)

See Treasurer's Report.

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.3.4 Incorporation (Chris Bolton)

See Treasurer's Report.

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.3.5 National Access (BCA Chair)

See Chair's Report.

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.3.6 Publications & Information (Zac Woodford)

Please see Appendix 2 regarding JustGo.

At this point there was discussion about ZW's report on possible uses for JustGo and the benefits/ issues. ZW stated there is nothing to vote on or move forward with at the moment, but it was good to raise awareness of the capabilities of the JustGo system so its use could be expanded in the future. RN mentioned a possible T&E use.

AK mentioned that ZW is making good progress with the student caving handbook.

ZW was very excited to see UNESCO have pushed through the International Day of Caves and Karst (13th September). ZW suggested holding an event to mark the first one and that he has been in touch with BCRA about this. JG said he also thinks it is brilliant it has been approved. He thought British showcaves would probably like to be involved. JG can raise it with ABIS (the Association of British and Irish showcaves) as he is at a meeting with them in January. JG said it would be a good opportunity for BCA and BCRA to work together. ZW will put together a small group to work on this.

6.3.7 Qualification Management Committee (George Plant)

QMC has been busier than usual over the last few months; we've been keeping going with updating the syllabuses in their various guises, and formats. This, along with finalizing the Geology, the Risk Assessment and the Mines documents is a lot of work and has taken quite some time. The syllabuses keep throwing up questions, despite being used successfully for years; although this creates work and headaches, I think it

shows that we take our responsibilities seriously and strive for perfection! We also had to deal with some queries that came via BCA – the lack of Scottish T/As; the use of Logos and the Terms of Reference; all completed or on the way there! There's a core few of us do a fair bit of the work, but we are fortunate to have many colleagues in QMC that chip in with some significant tasks.

We had a small stall at Hidden Earth – thank you to Stephan for staffing that (and thanks to Mary for all the work getting a banner and flyers ready in time!) Hopefully it was well received. Stephan has already volunteered to do it next year!

We have started liaising with SUi over their request for 'parity' between our award schemes. The meetings that we've had so far have been really positive and we look forward to doing some good work with them. The Irish cavers appear to be a really active bunch, so I might need to up my game.

Unfortunately, we also got involved in a nasty piece of business. We became aware of a forged CIC certificate which quickly led on to other things. My report on this is below [Appendix 3] and has now been shared with some relevant organisations; I'll try and make this next meeting in case there's any questions.

GP added he has been busy with the Liam McCarthy issue recently and has just been contacted by another club that may have been affected. He thinks more may come forward. RN asked who should concerned persons contact about recognition of awards in Northern Ireland. GP confirmed it is the Speleological Union of Ireland (SUI).

AK praises QMC for being very active recently. They have been very involved in the Liam McCarthy issue, and acting on lessons learnt. E.g. introducing a qualification checker and official policy on how professionals display their awards.

They have also opened two new panels for Scotland and Devon and Cornwall for trainer assessors to meet the needs in those areas. Finally, they have responded quickly to a request for logos for award holders to display.

6.3.8 Radon (Dormant)

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.3.9 Training & Equipment (Vacant)

AK confirms the next meeting is on the 10th of December. He will send out an agenda soon. AK stated there have been discussions about having a page on the BCA website to display all regional training courses in one place.

6.3.10 Youth & Development (Isaac Neale)

I started writing this report at 9:30 on the 11th of November. This is a key date as at 14:15 that afternoon, a focus group was hosted by Organised Fun for all of the involved student caving clubs. Whilst I waited for that to be completed I sent some messages to other people involved in Y&D matters just to double check everything was as it was before I submitted my report. It is now the 12th of November, and I am re writing the entire thing. Hmm.

Organised Fun

Not knowing exactly what would be covered / enquired about in the focus group I put together an email explaining again the importance of the focus group and covering some key points such as qualifications, peer to peer training, insurance, and Alumni involvement. I thought it was important to also cover some of the logic / reasoning behind discussion points such as qualifications, as this is something I especially struggled with as a student, knowing they were not what we wanted, but not being able to give an adequate reason why. This email was found useful by many people, and I received a lot of really good feedback about it.

I also did some chasing down / harassment of all the clubs involved to make sure they had received my email, were aware of the focus group, and were planning to turn up. In the end I believe all but one university turned up to the focus group.

Minutes are not yet released however the meeting was transcribed by AI. I received a copy of this and held phone calls with students from the different clubs after the meeting to get a picture of what happened. The focus group looked at a few topics. OF asked what clubs did before, during, and after trips in regard to safety. They then moved onto alumni involvement, what groups and body's supported caving, and leadership systems present within clubs. OF questioned if callouts were / could be set with SU's. This was very quickly and logically shut down as a concept by the students.

One of the difficulties in this immediate post meeting phase comes from the fact that whilst the meeting was transcribed (to albeit a rather lacklustre standard by AI), there is no record of any discussion held in the meetings text chat function. From my understanding, during a discussion about different clubs' internal leadership systems, OF jumped on the point asking whether the certification of club leaders was helped by the BCA and CHECC. Whilst individuals speaking made it reasonably clear that clubs internal leadership systems were not qualifications, there are fears from some that this could have been taken the wrong way and could have been perceived by OF as a way to create / suggest an organised leadership frameworks be required by Students Unions. We will have to wait and see on this matter.

Finally for this matter I was incredibly disappointed to see that due to perceived differences in opinions over what the tone / approach to the meeting should be a few clubs and individuals have taken it upon themselves to hold meanspirited discussions and send rude and antagonistic messages between each other. Not exactly the cohesion that would be ideal to see right now, with such a large potential threat on the horizon.

Staffordshire University Caving Club

Good news first, I spent some money! £354 on helmets, lights and tackle sacks. From my perspective this was brilliant and once in the hands of the club, as long as final SU approval was granted, there wasn't anything left for them to do aside from cracking on with caving.

The less than good news is that whilst the club has been approved by the SU, it is in an 'in principle' way. SU "senior management" have stipulated 4 potentially difficult points.

- “1. As this is a high risk activity we would need to have confirmation of all the due diligence and checks
2. Kit would need to be tested to ensure the appropriate level of safety
3. Sessions to be led by an appropriately trained instructors [sic]
4. Liaison with insurers to ensure the appropriate cover is in place”

Some of these are clearly sub optimal. A person who I assume to be the Staffordshire SU's club/ sports officer is apparently in liaison on these points. I also know that Callum has done a lot of explaining about how caving worked during the setting up meetings / correspondence, and it did appear to be understood at the time. Whilst of course we all reel at the words 'appropriately trained instructors', I am holding out that there is a chance that is just a poor choice of understanding of wording on their part, and they do just mean having people in the club who can lead trips based of a normal peer to peer system. We don't know yet and it is being looked into.

Ghar Parau Survey

I was asked to aid in the dissemination of a survey which gathered ideas for the future development of Ghar Parau. According to the survey creator there is drive from GPF for change and making an impact, with consensus being that the greatest impact would be from developing younger expedition cavers. Data was needed to back this up, however. Getting involved with this was raised as a potential avenue for a Y&D project due to the greater scope granted by it being a Y&D project. The survey closes in a few days at time of writing, we will see if there is potential for Y&D involvement based on its findings. I am very cautious about the potential for stepping on toes.

Warrick???

I happened to be at the TSG on Monday the 3rd of November. I ran into some lads who weren't in a club it seemed, friends from different parts of the country, one of them lending them kit and taking the other two on their first trip underground – cool. As I was leaving on Tuesday morning, I remembered I should probably mention too them I am the Y&D officer. They were pleased to find this out, with their leader mentioning they might send some of the Warrick lot my way. On the drive home I started to think, Hang on does Warrick have a caving club? I asked Tom Phillips later and remembered, of course, that in my last year of CHECC committee someone did try to start up a club at Warrick but it all fizzled out when the person setting it up worked weekends so they couldn't get out anywhere. It must not have fizzled out as much as we thought.

So, what we've learned from me happening to be at the TSG on a Tuesday is that Warrick does kind of have a student caving club, but it is a member of the mountaineering club with a hefty car boot kit store acquired off Facebook Marketplace occasionally taking people on mid-week jollies. I'm sure there is a stokeable ember there... I have found the leaders phone number on an old Y&D email (March 2024). I'll get in touch.

IN reported the boxes of caving publications and books provided by the British Caving Library went down very well at the recent CHECC event. Students were very pleased to be able to take the publications and all the publications disappeared very quickly!

IN agreed with RN's report earlier, that the best help for LUCC would be help from other student clubs. IN has already made Lancaster aware that if they want to benefit from BCA help and money, they do need to join the BCA.

IN updated Council on the recent Organised Fun meeting and a very productive debrief meeting was held as part of CHECC. Organised Fun were impressed by the existence of CHECC, especially how it links student caving clubs so they can learn from and support each other.

IN fed back that Organized fun have been impressed by how organized and coherent student caving clubs are. He is hopeful this will lead to a good outcome for student caving clubs. RN encouraged IN to use his BCA budget to attend meetings in person where possible, saying that having a BCA representative at these meetings can go a long way to reassure student unions. RN empathized the importance of the work currently being done by IN and his team, as student caving is the biggest recruiter of new cavers. He urged IN to ask, or recruit more people, if needed, to stay on top of this work.

6.4 Additional Reports by Appointed Officers

6.4.1 British Caving Library (Jenny Potts)

Hidden Earth Library Stand

A very successful weekend where we were able to pass on in return for donations a huge amount of duplicate material, mostly from the Don Mellor collection. Total received in donations was approximately £166. Thanks to Russell Myers and Katie Eavis for help with transport and running the stand. Since then, we have checked periodicals where we appear to have unwanted multiple duplicates and have "pruned" this to only 2 issues of each item. So we now have space to work again and are able to get on with cataloguing the worthwhile part of the Don Mellor collection, which includes interesting archive material.

Library Phone and Broadband

We have been dissatisfied with the business service from BT for some time, it is expensive and the broadband is slow, occasionally dropping out altogether. The Librarian is now investigating alternatives, at least one of which would appear to be cheaper and potentially more reliable.

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.4.2 FSE Representative (Tom Phillips)

No report received.

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.4.3 Insurance Manager (Vacant)

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.4.4 Newsletter Editor (Vacant)

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.4.5 Safeguarding Officer (Chris Boardman)

No report received.

No discussion or queries raised at the meeting.

6.4.6 UIS Representative (John Gunn)

This report is being prepared prior to the UIS Bureau meeting on 18 November and if there are any important matters they will be reported verbally to Council. However, there is one very important announcement: On 12th November the 43rd Session of the UNESCO General Conference, meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, officially proclaimed an International Day of Caves and Karst (IDCK), to be celebrated every 13 September. The proposal, which was submitted by the Slovenian Government, was developed, and involved a large amount of work by, the International Speleological Union under the leadership of former President Nadja Zupan Hajna. BCRA and BCA sent a joint letter of support for the proposal, and we will need to think of appropriate ways to celebrate the first IDCK on 13th September 2026.

JG added that an initiative by the United Nations Environment Programme, which the Indonesian government has put forward, is a resolution on the protection of caves and karst. JG said it would be good to support it, but it can only be officially supported by state bodies, or by a recognised non-governmental organization. The German equivalent of the BCA is the only Speleo body currently recognised. They are sending two people to Nairobi to support it, and the cost of doing so has come to €5000. They are seeking support from other national bodies.

JG proposes BCA offer £250 in support, and BCRA will match this for a total donation of £500 from British caving. If it is successful JG thinks it will be to caving's advantage. At this point there was some discussion about whether the German body needs backup, and should more caving bodies look to become recognised. Also, whether the need to conserve caves could be used as justification for keeping cavers out of caves. JG's view is only cavers are able to properly monitor and protect caves.

Motion to donate £250 to support this

Proposer: John Gunn **Seconder:** Jenny Potts

Abstentions: None

For: AK, LJW, JP, PJ, MH, CJB, SP, TRY, AE, AR, JG

Against: None

Motion passed.

6.5 Reports by BCA Staff

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

New clubs:

One new club has applied to join BCA as a member club since the last meeting:
Heighington Shaft Inspectors Caving Club

I have read their constitution and aims and recommend BCA accepts them as a club member.

Not strictly a new club but I have been contacted by the Combined Caving and Diving Club. This club has re-formed from the disbanded Ulster SSCC. They have sent me a copy of their constitution. I am not sure, in this situation, if they need council approval but if they do I recommend we approve them as a BCA member club.

Individual BCA members

6704 people have joined BCA for 2025 – this includes members joining directly and also those joining via clubs.

Renewals:

BCA renewals will open on the 1st of December. It is our second year running renewals through our new online membership system. I am expecting a few issues and the need to help some individuals and clubs out with the renewal process, but it should all run pretty smoothly.

Last year I was very pleased at how smoothly everything ran, despite it being our first year on the new system.

Insurance:

We are currently in the process of preparing to renew the BCA insurance. Myself and CJB have completed the renewal questionnaire, plus had a meeting with Howden. We are now awaiting quotes for 2026 renewal.

Artificial Cave:

It has been agreed the annual service of the cave trailer will be moved to spring. This is beneficial as it will receive attention after being parked up most of the winter, and just before its busy spring and summer season.

The cave has one more booking for 2025, at the end of November.

The cave has taken £580 in booking fees for 2025, including the remaining booking, who have already paid.

The new fees for using the cave have come into effect. These are £40 for BCA members and £50 for non- members. BCA members get a lower rate as a benefit of membership.

Social Media:

I am still trying to regularly post on Facebook, UKCaving and Buddlepit on behalf of the BCA.

I'd welcome contributions from anyone in BCA. Please feel free to email me with anything that might interest BCA members and UK cavers generally.

Working Groups Minutes:

Since the last council meeting I have taken responsibility for compiling minutes for some of the BCA working groups. So far, I have compiled minutes for one Anchor WG meeting and one T and E WG meeting using the zoom recording. Thanks to Aidan for his help with this.

After some discussion it was decided there is no need to vote on the acceptance of the new clubs, and a recommendation alone is sufficient. But Council accepts there is a collective responsibility for the clubs accepted as members.

7.0 Acceptance of Reports

Motion: To accept the Officers' reports submitted

Proposer: Rostam Namaghi **Second:** Aidan Kuhlmann

Abstentions: None

For: AK, LJW, JP, PJ, MH, CJB, SP, TRY, AR,

Against: None

Motion Passed.

8.0 Matters arising from the previous Council Meeting

9.0 Items for Discussion

10.0 Any Other Business

10.1 Motion: To approve the Qualifications Management Committee's Terms of Reference as included in Appendix 4.

Proposer: Aidan Kuhlmann **Second:** Rostam Namaghi

Abstentions: None

For: AK, LJW, JP, PJ, MH, CJB, SP, TRY, AR,

Against: None

Motion Passed.

10.2 Future Council Meetings

There was some discussion about the best timings for the Council Meetings adjacent to the AGM in Monyash on Sunday the 28th of June 2026. It was felt the 31st of March is just over 12 weeks before the AGM and should be fine in regard to the deadlines in the constitution.

The dates of the following council meetings will be:

- Tuesday the 20th of January at 7pm
- Tuesday the 30th of March at 7pm
- Tuesday the 19th of May at 7pm
- Tuesday the 7th of July at 7pm

11.0 Details of the Next Meeting

Tuesday the 20th of January at 7pm via Zoom

RN thanked everyone for their attendance and work behind the scenes.

BCA Provisional Budget 2026

EXPENDITURE	Contact	A	B	C	Weighted total	
Regional Councils						
Caving Wales / Ogof Cymru		5000	800	2000	5600	3.4%
Council for the Northern Caving Community		5100	3000	1000	6700	4.1%
Council of Southern Caving Clubs		2450	2300	7275	4328	2.6%
Derbyshire Caving Association		4820	1650	600	5705	3.5%
Devon & Cornwall Underground Council		2500	2500	500	3800	2.3%
						Total for Regional Councils 16%
Working Groups						
Conservation & Access	VK	0	0	0	0	0.0% VK agrees the WG doesn't need a budget for itself
Equipment & Training	AK	500	1000	1000	1100	0.7% TBC after T&E WG meeting
Anchors	PK	200	200	1000	400	0.2% TBC after AWG meeting
Youth & Development	IN	1000	1200	1400	1740	1.1% Email from Isaac
National Access	RN	0	0	0	0	0.0% Rostam said it doesn't need a budget yet
Publications & Information	ZW	410	50	300	465	0.3% Request £80 + £300@10%, HE banner £80, stand £250-300
Qualification Management Committee	GP	0	0	0	20933	-0.5% Percentage is net of income
Radon	GT	0	0	0	0	0.0% Dormant
Artificial Cave	KE	450	90		495	0.0% £350 storage, service was £80 in 2024 allow £100
Insurance – assume 5% + 5% as 50% risk		5%	5%			
Public Liability < £2M + combined	CJB/KE	47387	2257		48516	29.6%
Public Liability £2M - £5M	CJB/KE	13074	623		13385	8.2%
Public Liability £5M - £10M	CJB/KE	15876	756		16254	9.9%
Public Liability £10M - £20M	CJB/KE	5881	280		6021	3.7%
						Total for Insurance 51%
Descent	ZW/RN				2520	1.5% As 2025?
GPF	Exec				3000	1.8% As 2025?
BCL – grant	Exec				12000	7.3% As 2025?
BCL- staff	CJB				7200	4.4% Not previously itemised, £3k in 2025 but lots to do
Membership admin	CJB				8600	5.2% Katie's work on Membership
Stripe/Adyen fees	CJB				1390	0.8% Based on members paying through JustGo in 2025
Payroll admin	CJB				625	0.4% Increased from £300 when Conformance did it
Staff support to officers	CJB				4800	2.9% Katie's work on Insurance, Minutes, etc
Admin expenses	CJB				50	0.0% phone, post
Bank & CC charges					44	0.0% Bank no longer charging monthly fee
AGM	Exec	400	200		500	0.3% Effectively £500 +/- £100 (Rostam & Aidan to review)
Incorporation	Exec	400	200		500	0.3% Effectively £500 +/- £100 (Rostam & Aidan to review)
Safeguarding		48	24		60	0.0% DBS checks, as budgeted for 2025
SRA membership	CJB				260	0.2% 2025 + 4%
UIS membership	CJB	400	36		418	0.3% 480 Euro @ 1.2 to 1.1 Euro/£
FSE membership	CJB	663	89		708	0.4% 795 euro (possibly +4%) @ 1.2 to 1.1 Euro/£
JustGo for membership	CJB	4749	44.88		4771	2.9% Assume 4% indexing for Q3-Q4
IT						
Licences	CJB/SM	2706			2706	1.7% Includes some legacy still used by BCRA
Support (Simon)	CJB/SM	600		500	650	0.4% Based on 2025
					186243	100.0%
INCOME						
Membership	KE/CJB	182032			182032	
Artificial cave	KE/CJB	450			450	
QMC (set against expenditure above)	MW/CJB	21825			21825	
Interest	CJB	4355			4355	
					208662	
Overall surplus					£22,419	Surplus forecast in proposal for fees increase £26150
Reserves at 1 Jan 2025	142,908	From 2024 accounts				
Anticipated deficit 2025	1050	As Sept Council with adjustments (2025 budget predicted £5930 deficit)				
Estimated Reserves 1 Jan 2026	141858					
Surplus as above	22419					
Estimated Reserves 31 Dec 2026	164276					
Allocation to development fund	7500	(provisional)				
General reserve	156776					
Target minimum reserve (75% of turnover)	156497					
	280	margin				

Preliminary Report on potential further utilization of Just Go



Overview

This report details preliminary findings from an investigation into the potential further uses of the “Just Go” membership management system currently used for managing BCA membership. The goal of the investigation was to ascertain what would be technically feasible within the Just Go system in regards to offering services to our members, both individuals and organizations. Particular focus was put into how we could streamline access to caves, club resources and caving events.

Background

Caving is a grass roots sport and as such the resources and services provided by the BCA should be built around the needs of individual members and Clubs. It was this philosophy that drove the investigation into the technical possibilities presented by Just Go. Ideas such as automations and centralised easy access to essential resources were the main avenues explored.

Investigation Methodology

All research was conducted through an interview with [Katie Eavis](#), the membership management officer. Any answers she was not able to provide were sought from the Just Go team.

Several potential use cases for Just Go were investigated. Each use case is focused around a potential easy-to-access service-platform the BCA could provide which member clubs could then use to provide access to resources for their members or other members of the community.

Just Go Systems

Just go provides several functionalities beyond just membership management which were at the core of this investigation. The three main functionalities concerned are events, an online store, and qualifications management. Any item registered to any of these services can be customised by us to a degree that allows for different access/pricing based on the clubs a member is a part of. The use-cases in the following section explore how these services could be used to provide services to our members.

Investigated Use Cases

This section details the main use cases investigated.

Managing Events

There are currently many BCRA and BCA events that are publicised through existing channels such as the associated organisations websites and social media channels. However, some of these events have limited spaces, thus requiring ticketing. This can be achieved through the Just Go events system. But the core caveat is that Just Go's admin levels are not very finely granulated. This means that at current, the only person who can create events is the Membership Officer. Once an event has been created, management of that event can then be shared with the member organising it. We could create a system whereby BCA/BCRA events can be requested from the Membership Officer via a Google Form. The requester can then be made a manager for that event.

If this process were to become streamlined enough, we could even reverse it, so people interested in attending an event can request one be put on, e.g. training.

It was also investigated as to whether regional body training events could be publicised and managed through Just Go. While this was ascertained to be possible, again it would require the regional bodies training officers to reach out to the Membership Officer to ask for the events to be created each time. There is then also the risk of running afoul of Just Go as currently the system has been purchased for the BCA specifically, and we may have to convince them that the regional bodies are *not* significantly different enough from the BCA to warrant purchasing the systems for themselves. While this argument is feasible to make, it may raise concerns around the independence of the regional councils.

Pros:

- Centralised event management
- Centralised event listing for members to browse
- Ticketing system

Cons:

- Additional administration tasks for the Membership officer

Booking Resources

Through the use of Just Go Events it may be possible to create a system whereby member organisations in possession of resources such as keys, huts, etc. could list those resources on Just Go for individual members to book. Many of these organisations already have resources for doing this online, but by bringing them together on Just Go, it would create an easier user experience for the members trying to acquire these resources.

What's more, it is possible to put in discounts for members of certain sub-organisations (clubs). So, for instance, members of a club with a hut could receive a reduced nightly rate automatically when they purchase online.

However, this idea is currently untenable for the BCA in cases where resources would be paid for due to the fact that all purchases through the BCAs Just Go must be for the BCA. Just Go will insist that any club wishing to handle purchases through its system purchase their own Just Go subscription to manage its membership and resources rather than letting the BCA manage purchases on its behalf.

However, for non-purchaseable resources such as regional council keys, this may be possible but may suffer from the same independence concerns mentioned in [Managing Events](#).

Pros:

- Centralised resource management
- Ease of access to community resources
- Ease of management for resource holding organizations

Cons:

- Not tenable for purchased resources
- Potential political ramifications

Purchasable Events

Purchasable events such as Hidden Earth and CHECC could be managed through the Just Go Events system which allows for events to have paid for ticketing. Again, this would offer simplified access to such events by the membership. What's more, events can be limited to members who are a part of particular clubs, so CHECC could be limited to members of Student Clubs (however, this would include alumni). While this would be possible for Hidden Earth, given the arrangement between the BCA and BCRA with Just Go, it would require outreach from the Hidden Earth team to make it happen. CHECC would likely not be possible as, again, we would have to convince Just Go that CHECC is a part of the BCA enough to not need to purchase their own subscription in order to handle purchases on their behalf.

Pros:

- Centralised ticket management
- Easy access for members

Cons:

- May not be tenable for all member groups due to purchasing limitations

Permit Applications

Just Go has a qualifications system that has been used extensively by the QMC group for several years now. This could be used for applying for permits for certain caves. It would centralise access permits making it more convenient for members to

apply for them. What's more, data already entered by members as part of their account set-up could automatically be entered into permit applications providing greater convenience. I have also been informed by the membership officer that a certain show cave that requires permits, regularly checks that people who apply for those permits are BCA members. By gating permit applications behind BCA membership, it would save them having to perform that check. But, as mentioned above, it would not be possible for the BCA to manage payment for said permits on the behalf of other organizations.

Pros:

- Centralised permit application
- Permits gated behind BCA membership
- Convenient for members to apply for

Cons

- Would require technical integration with permit bodies
- Requires permit bodies to sign up to the system
- Cannot be used for paid permits

Conclusion

Provided above was a brief overview of the most tenable of many ideas. Actualising them will still require further investigation and research as well as volunteer or paid hours to actually achieve. They would then also need to be embraced by the membership. As such, I would advise polling the membership to ascertain their interest in using these systems before actually acting on them any further.

By Zac Woodford

BCA Publications & information Officer

November 2025

Qualification Management Committee

Chair's Report on Forged Certificates

Autumn 2025



In September we became aware of an individual who had presented a CIC certificate to an organisation for verification. QMC quickly realised that the certificate was a forgery, and later, other forged BCA certificates, from the same person, came to light. We tried to reach the individual concerned, but they weren't contactable.

The matter has been escalated to the Police who have opened an investigation; the forged CIC forms part of a wide-ranging inquiry, therefore speculation is to be discouraged.

This is a good reminder to us all to remain vigilant; although this appears to be an isolated incident, it could happen again and the increasing ease of access to AI will make it far more achievable to forge certificates. The JustGo database contains a 'Coach Checker' function, that can help to verify qualifications.

We are taking actions to try and reduce the potential for this reoccurring. These measures include:

- Inform all Trainer/ Assessors of this incident by sharing with them this memo.
- Request this memo be forward to AHOEC & ACI
- Investigate making it mandatory that all award holders be listed in the "Coach Checker", this being visible to the public. [Maintain the *opt in* for award holders to choose if they wish their contact details to be visible]
- Investigate revising the Coach Checker to list all award holders' qualifications (currently just lists one)
- Investigate adding a *certificate download* button within the Coach Checker
- Incorporate a QR code and web address linking to the Coach Checker, onto all award holders' certificates

George Plant

QMC Chair

17/10/25



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

(2) Membership

- (a) The group will be convened and chaired by the Qualifications Management Committee Chair.
- (b) Members will be invited by the convenor, and will include The Training Administrator, the Area Liaison Officers, Voluntary Sector, AHOEC, ACI, CIC Panel as well as BCA.
- (c) The working group will endeavour to ensure the interests of the BCA's Constituent Bodies.
- (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 ensure these are published on the 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 manage its own income and expenditure to achieve an approximately neutral budget. On average it should neither require subsidy from BCA general funds nor produce a surplus.
- (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 three times a year. Regular discussions between the Training Administrator, Chair, Deputy, and CIC Chair occurring in between.
- (b) The convening officer will, with support from BCA staff, prepare the agenda for these meetings.
- (c) Decisions will be made by majority consensus and where consensus cannot be reached the issue shall be brought to the BCA National Council.
- (d) This section does not limit how the work is done, just how decisions are made.

German Speleological Federation VdHK

www.vdhk.de

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To whom it may concern

Nesselwang, November 21, 2025

Exciting News: Karst Ecosystems on the Global Stage - your support is crucial!

Dear friends of caves and karst,

At the end of September, Indonesia submitted a resolution on karst ecosystems to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)—a true milestone, as this is the first time our topic will be discussed at that global level!

While the German Speleological Federation (VdHK) has been actively engaged with the UN Environment Program (UNEP) since 2020, this recent development still came as a wonderful surprise. As the only speleological organization currently accredited by UNEP, the VdHK is honoured to contribute to this important process. But we will not stand alone, beside the speleo family, other groups like the Scientific and Technology Major Group are supporting us.

In person negotiations will begin December 1 at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi. Two VdHK representatives will participate and organize a side event on karst at UNEA on December 11, 2025, which will be streamed live. We will share the link as soon as it is available.

Your country could act as a co-sponsor of the resolution on karst ecosystems and vote in favour.

Here's how you can help:

- Reach out to your environmental ministries or foreign offices to see if they're aware of and support the resolution (see a suggested template attached)
- Feel free to explain why caves and karst are important in your country.
- Time is of the essence! Discussions are ongoing, and the vote will take place by December 12.

If you'd like to support us financially, please get in touch. We'd be incredibly grateful. Our estimated costs are around €5,000, and every contribution—no matter the size—makes a meaningful difference. The VdHK will inform speleological federations worldwide about this initiative, and we'd be delighted to feature your logo as a supporter on our website and during the side event to highlight the strong solidarity of our underground community.

Unfortunately, the current text of the resolution isn't publicly available yet, as negotiations with UN member states are still in progress. But information on the content, any support and more is available at our new website:

www.karst-aware.org.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you very much,
with warm speleo regards

VdHK President