British Caving Association

Minutes for Council Meeting

Tuesday the 21st of May 2026 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
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9	Items for Discussion
10	Any Other Business
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1.0 Apologies for Absence

Allan Richardson, Andy Eavis, Peter Jackson, David Jean

2.0 Persons present

Rostam Namaghi, Aidan Kuhlmann, Chris Bolton, Stephan Natynczuk, Linda Wilson, Zac Woodford, Violet Astle, Tony Radmall, Thomas Phillips, John Gunn, Victoria Kocher, Isaac Neale, Jenny Potts, Mike Higgins, Wayne Sheldon, Sam Lee, Ian Healey

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

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	*Vacant*		
	Position 2 (2024-2026)	Andy Eavis	AE	Y
Group Member Representatives	Position 1 (2023-2025)	*Vacant*		
	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
	FoDCCAG	Ian Healey	IH	Y
	Ogofa Cymru / Caving Wales	Allan Richardson	AR	Y
Constituent Body Representnatives	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	*Dormant*		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?	31/03	Report?	19/05	Report?	21/07	Report?
BCA Executive	Chair	RN	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Treasurer	CJB	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Secretary	AK	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Members	Position 1		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Representatives	Position 2		N	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	N/A
Group Member	Position 1		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Representatives	Position 2	JP	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Regional Council	CNCC	TRY	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
Representatives	CSCC	LJW	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
N.B: Reports are	DCA	MH	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
optional	DCUC	DJ	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
	FoDCCAG	IH	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
	Ogofa Cymru	AR	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Constituent Body	ACI	SL	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Representnatives	BCRA	JG	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
N.B: Reports are	BCRC	EP	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
optional	CDG	SP	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	CHECC	TP	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
	NAMHO	PJ	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
	NCSASU	TR	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
	WP CST	RV	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Working Group	Anchor	PK	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Convenors	C&A	VK	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Finance	CJB	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Incorporation	CJB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	National Access	RN	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y
	P&I	ZW	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
	QMC	SN	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
	T&E	VA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
	Y&D	IN	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Other Positions	BCL Rep.	JP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
	FSE Rep	TP	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
	Safeguarding	CBD	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	UIS Rep.	JG	N	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
	BCA Admin	KE	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	Y	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

Motion: To accept the previous Council Meetings' Minutes as most recently submitted by the Secretary

Proposer: AK, Seconder: CJB

For: 11

Against: None mentioned

Abstain: None mentioned

SN states his role needs updating from ACI to QMC in the agenda for the meeting.

JG states on the 31st March minutes he is down as being 'not present' as BCRA rep, but present as UIS rep. Please can this updated to present for both.

6.0 Officer Reports

6.1 Executive

6.1.1 Chair (Rostam Namaghi)

I'd like to thank everyone for a very productive AGM, we had some useful discussion, and I think it was a great showcase of how the BCA works - many thanks to the DCA and all the volunteers who made it possible.

I am very happy to announce that we have a date and a venue for the AGM next year - Sunday the 13th of June in the English village of Bicknor, to be hosted s by the Forest of Dean Cave Conservation & Access Group. It will be a wonderful opportunity to showcase the forest.

My only official activity since the AGM came from the 'Safe Adventures' meeting organised by Organized Fun. Unfortunately, I did not realise they had dropped off CHECC and the Y&D Officer and so as no one had been flagged as going I attended. The meeting was heavily stacked with organisations set up to provide training, and few had any direct Student Club experience. The BCA strongly pushed back against qualifications as a requirement for leading and advocated for a Peer Review Leadership System with training and activity logs.

They will have had a 'shaping meeting' (30th of July) with unions to discuss their requirements and there is a further meeting on the 30th of July aimed at detailing the role of a Technical Advisor. The BCA and CHECC will be in attendance.

RN summarises his report. Nothing new raised.

6.1.2 Treasurer (Chris Bolton)

The Sport and Recreation Alliance reorganised last year and moved BCA into their NGB Division. This put us with competitive sport, including large commercial NGBs like the Football Association, and increased our subscription from £250 to over £700. I made it clear that this was neither suitable nor acceptable and after discussion they agreed to put us back in the Outdoor Recreation Division.

I have submitted a return for Corporation Tax for 2025. HMRC have scrapped their system and require commercial software, at a cost of £96 for this submission. We have to submit a return as we're liable to tax on any surplus on 'trading' activity (QMC and artificial cave). In 2025 we made a trading loss, and we would offset any

tax due against our donations to BCRA and GPF. Following incorporation the same software will be usable for sending accounts to Companies House.

The Annual Report cost £1294.56 to produce and post. This consists of £32.98 for a month's licence for the publishing software, £881 for printing and £397.76 for posting copies out. Katie's time was not costed separately from her other work.

The Finance Working Group, reviewing RCC claims for 2025, made a distinction for future years between caver training which made an unplanned loss and that which required an intentional subsidy. It is for the Training & Equipment WG to recommend how much BCA subsidises caver training; the FWG's role is administrative. This is not picking on training, or for saving money, or to criticise CNCC's excellent courses, just giving the decision to the responsible group.

The hybrid AGM cost £50 for the village hall and £53 for 4g data for the Zoom connection. Many thanks to Ben Marks, who provided the audio system free of charge, but may not do so in future.

CSCC's claim for 2025 has been confirmed and paid. There has been no other expenditure since the previous Council meeting except routine items such as staff salaries and insurance.

I have now served 2 years of my 3-year term as Treasurer and will not be standing for re-election in 2027. I would like to identify potential successors as soon as possible to avoid the problems that arose from having no Treasurer in post in 2023.

CJB explains the comment about the Finance working group in his report in more detail. Going forward the FWG would like caver training funding to be dealt with in the same way the C and A working group operate.
E.g. For routine maintenance grants the regions can decide how to spend and just submit a claim. For big items the RCCs approach the C and A WG who can discuss and agree it.
When it reaches the FWG they can just agree it as long as C and A WG have already agreed it.

For training this means a small amount of regional training, planned training or a small loss is fine to come straight through the FWG. But if RCCs are planning to spend a substantial amount on training this should be taken to the T and E WG to discuss and decide.
That way the T and E WG can make the decision on what the BCA

spends it money on, rather than the administrative FWG.
CJB suggest carrying on as before for 2026, with the shift to the T and E WG coming in 2027.

TR raises that Wessex CC missed the email about the Annual report as it went to spam. CJB requests anyone forward the headers of BCA emails that go to spam to him, so he can investigate why.

CJB highlights he is standing down next year – if anyone knows a caver who may be persuaded to take on the role please get in touch.

CJB adds 2027 membership fees to his report. The plan when increasing them for 2026 was to hold them for 2027 too, at the same levels. KE is keen to email clubs about fees and council needs to officially agree before the fees are communicated to members.
RN and CJB agree fees will probably need to increase for 2028.

Motion: To hold membership fees for 2027 at the same amounts as 2026

Proposer: CJB, Seconder: TR

For: 12

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

Motion passed.

6.1.3 Secretary (Aidan Kuhlmann)

In the short period since the AGM, I have mostly been involved with organising the 2027 AGM with the Forest of Dean – see Chair's report for further details. Work has also been done regarding incorporation – see Treasurer's report – and for Hidden Earth with Zac as Publications and Information.

Additionally, I have been involved in discussions regarding National Access, Organised Fun, Training & Equipment, and fielding a variety of contacts from BCA members and external bodies concerning different issues.

Thanks to Katie's work the draft minutes for the AGM are nearly done and I am just finishing up the final details ahead of publishing them.

AK summarises his report. Nothing new raised.

6.2 Regional Council & Representative Body Reports (Optional)

6.2.1 CDG (Simon Perkins)

An unfortunately sparse report for this meeting; whilst diving is progressing across the country, there is limited notable progress to officially report on.

The annual training camp took place over the weekend of the 11th/12th of July, hosted by the Derbyshire Section. It was well attended, with some excellent workshops and training sessions, and rounded off with a barbeque, making the most of the dry weather.

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.2.2 Caving Wales (Allan Richardson)

Nothing to report.

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.2.3 DCA (Mike Higgins)

Work on Faucet Rake is now complete except for the top of the shaft. The landowner is to deliver some topsoil and walling stone to tidy up the area, and the grill will be fitted as soon as it has been fabricated.

The radon monitors for DCA's monitoring programme have been delivered by UKHSA and handed over to the volunteers and all are now in place – my post on UK caving met with a surprising number of responses and I've now learned a new Latin phrase!

In Lathkill Dale a padlock has appeared on the gate that gives access to the metal stairway leading beneath the remains of Bateman's House to the shaft onto Lathkill Dale Sough and enquiries are being made with Natural England regarding this.

DCA's booklet "Caving, Land Managers and Liability", first published in 2014, has been checked, revised and updated. Further copies are being ordered and it shortly will be placed on the DCA website as a pdf download.

The Cave Discovery Fund, that has been in place for many years, has been wound up due to a lack of interest, no applications for assistance having been received for 11 years! It has been replaced by the Cave and Mine Digging Support Fund, to which the monies have been transferred. The procedure for applications

has been simplified and qualification for applying widened, so it is hoped that this will generate some interest once the details are up on the DCA website and have been advertised.

Problems continue with Suicide Cave and DCA is looking to move forward with plans to gate the entrance, supported by the landowner. Given the size of the entrance and the need for walling as well as a solid gate and a bat grill, DCA will be undertaking a consultation exercise with cavers before work on more detailed planning takes place.

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.2.4 **CSCC** (Linda Wilson & Joshitha Shivkumar)

CSCC Report to the AGM:

The past year has been another busy one for CSCC. The long-drawn out access discussions with Longleat estates regarding the caves in Cheddar Gorge finally came to fruition and an access agreement is now in place. Warden training has taken time but the system is now up and running. The agreement with Somerset Wildlife Trust for several sites in Harridge Wood is now in place and simply awaits the online permit system.

CSCC meetings, held on Zoom have been well-attended.

Anchors continue to be placed and replaced under the BCA scheme, as and when needed.

CSCC supported the formation of the new Forest of Dean regional council and wishes them well.

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.3 Working Group Convenor Reports

6.3.1 **Anchor** (Pete Knight)

Since my last report a subgroup of the AWG has been working on a new 'Pre Use Inspection of Resin Bonded Anchors' document to serve as guidance for cavers who are using anchors placed under the BCA scheme. This document has been read by a couple of 'normal' cavers for their feedback, and I have consulted on accessible formatting. This is circulated for comment to the whole AWG currently, with a view to hopefully accepting it at our meeting on the 27th of July.

On Saturday the 27th of July we held a workshop at Horseshoe Quarry in the Peak District. The workshop looked at methods for

removing anchors and was both an information sharing exercise and a chance to look at new ideas. We're confident that we have methods for removing most anchor types, however the removal of BP anchors does still present a challenge owing to their large shank and high strength. The Derbyshire installer team intend to do more work on this to develop a reliable method for future removal and re-use of holes if possible. At some point we'll bring all the techniques together into a guidance document for scheme installers. The workshop was attended by: Pete Knight, Aidan Kuhlmann, Chris Bolton, Ian Walker (CNCC), Jess Eades, Martyn Grayson, Nige Berry, Pete Wagstaff, Phil Wolstenhome, Josie Skirrow and her partner Chris (all Peak area).

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.

I intend to stand again for the post of convenor should BCA Council wish to have me. If anyone else wants a turn at the role then they are also welcome.

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.3.2 **Conservation & Access** (Victoria Kocher)

No report received.

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.3.3 **Finance** (BCA Treasurer)

See Treasurer's Report.

6.3.4 **Incorporation** (Chris Bolton)

Work has continued to develop ways to adapt BCA's current Constitution to meet the legal requirements for incorporation while retaining the present amateur and non-profit ethos. This resulted in the discussion paper present to the AGM, which generated useful input and a more radical idea which is currently being considered by the Group. Our aim is to have more definite proposals to share at Hidden Earth and a final decision at the 2027 AGM.

RN adds that the discussion at the AGM was very helpful.
RN hopes there will be definite proposals by Hidden Earth.

CJB states he has been in touch with AGM attendees with an interest in the incorporation and is starting to progress the plans.

LJW asks what the new suggestion for BCA incorporation raised at the AGM was?
The AGM was presented with a rough guide to an option for incorporation.
CJB explains Adam Fletcher who was present at the AGM suggested a simpler model involving a shell company with minimal members, a single director, and trustees appointed by the current association. This would allow BCA to maintain its current structure and constitution, aside from adding trustees.
This may be simpler to implement, but may lead to complications later on. CJB is touch with Adam Fletcher to fill in details on how it may work.
Once the incorporation group has one or two feasible structures for BCA as a limited company in mind they will consult an accountant and lawyer who specialise in this area to gain greater insight into what will work well for BCA. At this point council will be involved in the discussion.

ZW adds BCA members present at the AGM were unaware of the current structure of BCA council. Working with AK he has come up with a visual representation showing the council, as it is now, and by the first incorporation proposal. He waiting on a few more pictures than it can be shared.
RN suggests ZW circulates this around the council mailing list so council have a chance to comment.

6.3.5 **National Access** (Rostam Namaghi)

See Chair's Report.

6.3.6 **Publications & Information** (Zac Woodford)

Very little to report in the last period saving my attendance at the BCA BBQ and AGM.

I can now confirm though that there are plans for an IDCK event in the peak district. I am once again asking all regional reps if they can ask their members to organise some events for the day. If there are any events already being planned, I would really appreciate hearing about them! I am here to provide any and all support I can to these events.

ZW has designs ready to order for BCA banners and table cloth for HE. He has the stickers ready.

ZW asks who organises the talks at HE, with a view to liaising with them to see if some could be used for the IDCK? TR confirms it is Gary Douthwaite.

Further discussion about the IDCK has been minuted under JG's UIS report.

6.3.7 Qualification Management Committee (Stephan Natynczuk)

No report received.

SN gives a verbal report to the meeting:

SN says moving from a QMC member to the chair has been interesting and he thanks his support team.

SN would like to raise 4 issues that have come to his attention since becoming QMC chair, three of which he would value input from BCA council on.

1. He has been involved in revisiting the application matrix for trainer assessors.
2. The safe adventures report – members of the QMC are wondering how it might affect their work. Other than BCA leadership qualifications how can BCA confidently evidence competence to insurers satisfaction?
3. Radon monitoring – will the results of the current DCA monitoring be made available to all cavers via the BCA website?
4. Access to suitable venues for BCA leadership assessment courses. In particular the South Wales panel have lost access to some sites and are keen to try to negotiate access to OFD, and return to simpler systems for access for training and assessment.

In response:

4. RN states this isn't an area for BCA to get involved in as it is regional. He suggest they get in touch with Caving Wales instead.

3. RN states it is BCA data and should be available to all members. CJB clarifies it is actually a DCA initiative without BCA funding. MH states DCA are keen to share the data as widely as possible. He sees no reason for it not to published on the BCA website but will check at a DCA council meeting first.
RN states he is happy to be involved in discussions about radon and health impacts if required.

2. RN says when he was youth and development there was a agreement with QMC that the BCA has great awards, but they are not necessarily designed to take students caving. Although BCA recognises qualification holders can provide valuable training to clubs. He adds this letter probably needs updating and

he will attend a QMC meeting soon to discuss. He adds BCA recommends peer review and evidence of training logs for student clubs.

RN suggests award holders might be asked to act as technical advisors to student unions.

LJW asks in the chat how clubs will pay for technical advisors? RN thinks the idea is it is the student unions themselves that will have and pay for technical advisors.

BCA will know more after the meeting on the 30th.

6.3.8 Training & Equipment (Aidan Kuhlmann)

See Item 9.4.

6.3.9 Youth & Development (Isaac Neale)

There has been a further Organised Fun meeting as detailed in the Chair's report - I was keen to attend but myself and the CHECC representative were not included in the email chain from Organised Fun. We are aware of future meetings and are going to be proactive in representing Student Caving.

In lighter news I've thought up a fun little project to coincide with the IDCAK. A caving recruitment poster design competition, with the winning result being printed from the Y&D budget. Something nice that can get put up in town halls etc.

In addition to the report IN wishes to mention the situation Nottingham Uni CC have found themselves in. Nottingham Students union are undergoing a health and safety review and this has stopped NUCC running any trips (but the issue is much wider than caving and affects all Nottingham student clubs)
After much trying IN has arranged a meeting with Nottingham SU on the 23rd July. (RN says he available to attend if required)

IN, AK, TP and SL have been discussing the role of CHECC in regard to the Organised fun report. Whilst CHECC is very organised and useful the scope for being a technical advisor is very big, and not something CHECC should be doing.

TP adds CHECC is currently working on best practice within clubs, keeping a log, what to bring on trips etc.
TP mentions the good work Kai Trusson has done on this and that they should be recognised by BCA for their efforts.

6.4 Additional Reports by Appointed Officers

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

The Library is making efforts to pass on to clubs and individuals all duplicate publications received as part of donations from the relatives of deceased cavers. Katie and Karen have been working to sort and list these and Katie has circulated the lists around clubs and to interested individuals. At the BCA AGM weekend the Library received £40 in cash donations for duplicates taken on the day. Since then we have received a further £30 paid via BCRA for parcels of books sent on.

So £70.00 in all within the last month.

We still have more duplicates to sort and list from recent donations, aiming for people to collect packages of books at Hidden Earth where possible. There will also be a Library Stand where we hope to attract people to take away yet more books in return for a donation to Library funds, which we put towards expenses and new books.

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.4.2 **FSE Representative** (Tom Phillips)

No report received.

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.4.3 **Safeguarding Officer** (Chris Boardman)

No report received.

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.4.4 UIS Representative (John Gunn)

The main focus of the UIS remains the IDCK and the following text has been agreed:

Celebrate the First International Day of Caves and Karst!

On **13 September 2026**, the world will celebrate the **International Day of Caves and Karst (IDCK)** for the very first time following its proclamation by UNESCO.

This is a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of caves and karst for water resources, biodiversity, science, cultural heritage, and sustainable development.

The official international celebration will take place in **Postojna, Slovenia (10–13 September 2026)**://izrkp.zrc-sazu.si/en/dogodki/international-day-of-caves-and karst-idck

But IDCK belongs to everyone!

We encourage all UIS Member Countries, national societies, UIS Commissions, show caves, geoparks, biosphere reserves, universities, museums, schools, protected areas, NGOs, and local communities to organise their own IDCK activities around 13 September.

Whether you organise a lecture, cave tour, exhibition, school event, clean-up campaign, or social media activity, every event helps raise awareness of caves and karst.

Please register your planned IDCK events with the UIS. After your celebration, send us a short report and a few photographs so that we can showcase IDCK activities from around the world on the UIS and IDCK websites and social media.

In addition, Bärbel Vogel, President of the UIS Karst and Cave Protection Commission (KCPC) has sent the following message to all UIS Member Country Representatives:

"Dear friends of caves and karst,

A warm greeting from the UIS Karst and Cave Protection Commission (KCPC). Our mission is to inform and engage people in protecting caves and karst landscapes.

We're excited to share our new website: www.caveprotection.org. Here, you'll find:

• Links to useful literature

• A list of endangered caves and karst areas, including Australia's call to action to Save the Nullarbor

• Information on the France Habe Prize, the deadline for 2026 is June 30

• Updates on the UIS Arts and Letters Commission photo contest (the deadline is July 15)

• Our engagement on United Nations level and a side event on networks for sustainability on July 9, online participation is possible for everyone.

For the International Day of Caves and Karst September 13, we are going to provide a flyer on cave protection and cleaning which will be available for translation. We will also invite each country to contribute a 3-page overview of its caves and karst for the Environmental Outlook.

We need your help to spread the word globally!

• Let us know: Who is responsible for cave and karst protection in your federation or country?

• Please share our website and information widely.

We're here to support you—reach out with any questions!

Thanks a lot and warm speleo regards,

Bärbel and the UIS Karst and Cave Protection Commission"

As this is the last BCA Council meeting before 13th September, I hope we can allocate some time to discussing how the IDCK will be celebrated in Britain.

JG adds the caving world is all volunteers and therefore it can be hard to get events off the ground.

JG mentions the resources on the UIS website that can be used for the IDCK. He adds he has asked Bartek to tweak the video used to bid for the international congress to be used for IDCK instead.

TSG have hired a hall in Castleton, and plan to involve the Castleton show caves.
DCA/ BCRA will host something at Poole's cavern.
LW has offered a talk to Kents cavern, and to ZW.

RN adds he has a talk he used a few years ago that may suit an online/ general public event. He will arrange a chat with ZW separately to advance this, and other ideas for IDCK.
RN will also talk to David Rose (as suggested by LW) to see whether he can help with publicity.

JG highlights the importance of the strapline 'Explore, Understand, Protect'.

CJB suggests it would be a good idea to share the ideas raised at this meeting with the regional councils, via email.

6.5 Reports by BCA Staff

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

Groups:

North Wales Mine/ Cave Explorers have re-joined BCA after a gap of 2 years.
163 groups have so far joined BCA for 2026

Individuals:

6345 individuals have joined BCA for 2026 (directly or via clubs). This is similar to the same date in 2025. (End of 2025 BCA had 6763 members)

Insurance:

Since the last meeting we have had clarification from Howden about how the insurance cover applies to RCC, specifically in regard to paying trainers to run sessions. If anyone wants more info on this, please email me and I can provide it.

Howden have sent through a first go at the insurance microsite. CJB, AK, and I have looked over this and fed back some ideas and changes.

Social Media:

I am still trying to regularly post on the BCA website, 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.

Minutes: *Since the last council meeting, I have complied minutes for the last council meeting and a Conservation and Access group meeting. I plan to make a start on the AGM ASAP.*

2025 BCA Annual Report

The report is complete. Printed copies have been sent to all member clubs and were available to council members at the AGM. If you are on council and haven't yet got a printed copy, but would like one, please get in touch and we can arrange to get one to you.

Electronic copies were sent to all members we have permission to email news to, plus to all clubs with a plea to send it round their mailing lists.

Feedback has been good, with many really pleased to see more news/ information coming from the BCA.

Please assume it will be happening again next year so start collecting good photos/ information for your RCC, CB etc for 2026!

RN will chat with ZW about measuring BCA's social media activities and engagement.

RN adds he has had compliments about the annual report, including from BCA equivalents in other countries.

7.0 Acceptance of Reports

Motion: To accept the reports received by National Council from the BCA Officers and other representatives to the National Council

Proposer: MH, Seconder: TR

For: 12

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

8.0 Matters arising from the previous Council Meeting

8.1 Letter of Thanks to George Plant

See Appendix 1.

RN has already sent this to George. RN adds GP did a great deal of work in the role, and dealt with some difficult issues.

Motion: To thank George Plant.

Proposer: RN, Seconder: SN

For: All in favour (bar one abstention.)

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

9.0 Items for Discussion

9.1 Motion: To co-opt Jenny Potts as Group Member Representative and Andy Eavis as Individual Member Representative

Proposer: RN, **Seconder:** AK

For: 12

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

9.2 Plans for the celebration of the International Day of Caves and Karst

Covered under JG UIS report.

9.3 Working Group Convenors

Motion: To re-appoint:
- Pete Knight as Anchor Working Group Convenor
- Victoria Kocher as Conservation & Access Working Group Convenor
- Chris Bolton as Incorporation Working Group Convenor
- Rostam Namaghi as National Access Working Group Convenor
- Zac Woodford as Publications and Information Working Group Convenor
- Stephan Natynczuk as Qualification Management Committee Convenor
- Isaac Neale as Youth & Development Convenor

Proposer: AK, **Seconder:** TR

For: 11

Against: 0

Abstain: 2

9.4 Motion: To appoint Violet Astle as Training & Equipment Convenor

Proposer: AK, **Seconder:** RN

For: 12

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

See Appendix 2 for Violet Astle's motivations and background behind putting herself forward for the role.

RN introduces VA. VA approached RN at the AGM interested in knowing more about the T and E convenor role.
VA is keen to get in touch with TP (CHECC), IN (Y and D) and SN (QMC).
TP suggests a meeting soon, RN will send an email out to organise.
CJB will sort a T and E email address and workspace out for VA.

9.5 Working Group Terms of Reference
Motion: To continue the following Working Groups with the relevant Terms of Reference as found on the BCA website, but with the date updated – Anchor, Conservation & Access, Incorporation, National Access, Publications & Information, Qualifications Management Committee, Youth & Development, Training & Equipment

Voted on combined with 9.3 Working Group Convenors

Proposer: AK, **Seconder:** TR

For: 11

Against: 0

Abstain: 2

Each Working Group's Terms of reference can be found on the groups' webpage on the BCA website.

10.0 Any Other Business

AK will forward an email to SN a professional showcase opportunity.

RN would like to make a correction to his report in the BCA annual report. Contrary to his comments BCRA had not given any money to the individual defrauding money from his caving club/the caving community in Northern Ireland.

11.0 Details of the Next Meeting

15th of September 2026 at 7pm via Zoom

The 2027 BCA AGM will be held on Sunday the 13th of June at 10am at English Bicknor Village Hall, Ross Road, English Bicknor, Coleford, GL16 7PB

British Caving Association

British Caving Association, The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8RG
WWW – http://www.british-caving.org.uk, Email – bca@british-caving.org.uk

please reply to:

George Plant
george@nyy.org.uk
64 King's Gardens,
Sowerby,
Thirsk,
YO7 1NU

Date 13/07/2026

Dear George,

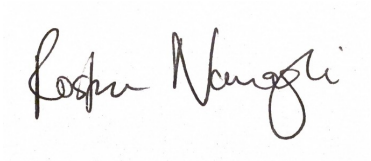
I am writing to thank you for your work as Chair of QMC for the last three years.

During this time, you represented QMC at various national meetings including discussions with other NGBs, HSE and the Scouts. You also represented QMC at BCA council meetings and formed a very good working relationship with the executive. You also stood in as ALO for Northern England for a period during this time, is another role you took on willingly. Mary, as Training Administrator, has added that you have been supportive and a pleasure to work with.

I must include a very personal thanks as well – the various issues that arose in Ireland took up a lot of time and effort and I remain incredibly grateful. That was a lot of work behind the scenes and things could have been a lot worse without you being proactive and a clear communicator.

Your work on the ongoing situation with SUI and the parity of their scheme was invaluable and I hope we can call on your experience over these matters in the future. You have consistently demonstrated a willingness to grasp the nettle when difficult issues have arisen, not shying away from challenging conversations or decisions when they have been needed. What has stood out most is your ability to deal with such matters in a way that is firm, fair and diplomatic, whilst remaining approachable and respectful of those involved. You have been quick to respond when concerns have been raised, taking the time to listen, understand and empathise, without ever avoiding the issue at hand. Your calm, measured and very human approach has helped steer the Committee through a number of challenging situations, earning the trust and respect of colleagues across QMC and BCA.

So, once again many thanks.



Dr Rostam Namaghi
Chair of the British Caving Association

Violet Astle Training & Equipment Convenor Motivations & Background

Motivations

Having learned the technical side of caving independently (from Vertical by Al Warild and ACT) and survived until later joining the TSG benefitting from a myriad of development opportunities several years ago now, I'm passionate about the breadth of expert opinion that exists at grassroots level within UK caving and the autonomy clubs/regional bodies have, but also about the benefits that have come from the BCA's capacity as NGB to focus this talent in order to develop/advocate for the sport on a national scale. I've always held an interest in some of the finer points of equipment and training and am keen to contribute to the best of my ability, but lacking the expert knowledge and experience held by contributing group members, I would view the role going forward as being a single accountable point of contact between the group and regional bodies/outside organisations, taking care of admin and scheduling to avoid this piling up and becoming a distraction.

Whilst new to some of the recent issues regarding student caving training requirements, I'd note that Organised Fun have this month started the next phase of their consultation on implementing the Safe Adventures guidance. This comes with mention of their interest in initial input and guiding of the conversation by 'technical experts'. Should group members deem dialogue on matters of equipment and training with groups such as Organised Fun or with the regulators necessary as has happened in some other sports, it seems important to ensure that the group as a panel of experts, able to authoritatively set out best practice in equipment and training on behalf of caving's NGB is well represented and able to access these proceedings early, holding the controlling body to account on matters such as deadlines. Overall, I'm enthusiastic about facilitating this as well as the existing project work which it's been interesting getting up to speed on.

Relevant background:

I've been caving for 7+ years, 6 of them active in the peak district as a member of the TSG. I've decent experience in varied caves/mines and have been taking some very interesting trips over the years including lots of digging, fieldwork for university research projects and in company ranging from total novices to some legendary figures in peak district caving who've taught me nearly everything I know. Having recently returned to caving after a year or so's absence, it's been awesome to get reinvolved with projects and see the results of some incredibly hard work by many skilled people. I've currently no experience of diving, anchor installation, technical rescue or surveying methods other than as an unskilled

assistant but am excited to hear back on a current application to DCRO which will hopefully provide some more development and I am always thankful to have access to such phenomenal caving and people. I currently work in an events/private sector medical company as a FREC with some involvement in on-the-job training and have some very limited experience of professional confined space rope access. I do have some basic formal admin/HR training, mostly with St John Ambulance regarding scheduling, creating agendas & minuting etc. and have been getting up to speed with Google Workspace and other BCA systems.