



DRAFT Minutes for Council Meeting

Tuesday the 15th of September 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

Simon Perkins, Tom Phillips, John Gunn, Andy Eavis, Pete Knight

2.0 Persons present

Chris Bolton, Aidan Kuhlmann, Peter Jackson, Richard Vooght, David Jean, Stephan Natynczuk, Isaac Neale, Tony Radmall, Zac Woodford, Jenny Potts, Mike Higgins, Todd Rye, Eve Chaddock, Victoria Kocher, Linda Wilson, Violet Astle, Rostam Namaghi, Allan Richardson, Joshitha Shivkumar, Tim Nichols, 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 (2025-2027)	<i>Vacant</i>		Y
	Position 2 (2026-2028)	Jenny Potts	JP	Y
Group Member Representatives	Position 1 (2025-2027)	<i>Vacant</i>		Y
	Position 2 (2026-2028)	<i>Vacant</i>		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 Representatives	Assoc. Caving Instructors	Sam Lee	SL	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	Stephan Natynczuk	SN	N
	Radon	<i>Dormant</i>		N
	Training & Equipment	Violet Astle	VA	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	21/07	Report?	15/09	Report?	TBC	Report?
BCA Executive	Chair	RN	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	Treasurer	CJB	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	Secretary	AK	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Members Representatives	Position 1		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
	Position 2		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Group Member Representatives	Position 1		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
	Position 2	JP	Y	N/A	Y	N/A		
Regional Council Representatives N.B: Reports are optional	CNCC	TRY	N	N	Y	Y		
	CSCC	LJW	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	DCA	MH	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	DCUC	DJ	N	N	Y	Y		
	FoDCCAG	IH	Y	N	Y	Y		
	Ogofa Cymru	AR	N	Y	Y	Y		
Constituent Body Representatives N.B: Reports are optional	ACI	SL	Y	N	N	N		
	BCRA	JG	Y	N	N	Y		
	BCRC	EP	N	N	N	N		
	CDG	SP	N	Y	Y	N		
	CHECC	TP	Y	N	N	N		
	NAMHO	PJ	N	N	Y	N		
	NCSASU	TR	Y	N	Y	N		
	WP CST	RV	N	N	Y	N		
Working Group Convenors	Anchor	PK	N	Y	N	Y		
	C&A	VK	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	Finance	CJB	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	Incorporation	CJB	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	National Access	RN	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	P&I	ZW	Y	Y	Y	N		
	QMC	SN	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	T&E	VA	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Other Positions	Y&D	IN	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	BCL Rep.	JP	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	FSE Rep	TP	Y	N	N	N		
	Safeguarding	CBD	N	N	N	N		
	UIS Rep.	JG	Y	Y	N	N		
	BCA Admin	KE	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

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

Proposer: AK, Seconder: CJB

For: MH, AK, RV, DJ, TR, LJW, PJ, JP, TRY

Against: None

Abstain: AR

Motion passed.

6.0 Officer Reports

6.1 Executive

6.1.1 Chair (Rostam Namaghi)

I attended the Safe Adventures meeting regarding technical advisors (along with Gethin and Sam) and this was productive but it was clear there is a great appetite for a national standard 'so that we know our clubs are the same as everyone else's'. The use of the word standard is alarming to many, and it is clear that if there is empty space then it will be filled with more stringent systems.

Publishing something that backs our members up in discussions that we are having with unions but doesn't fundamentally impair their ability to operate is key. What to publish remains the question and I suspect we cannot avoid publishing guidance on both equipment and the role of 'Technical Advisors'. I think this will break down into things that should be led by QMC and things that should be led by Youth and Development and CHECC. I am keen to facilitate each part of the BCA working in tandem on this.

The next meeting regarding Safe Adventures is on the 24th of September which I will be attending.

Work on incorporation is going ahead as previously planned and will be mentioned in a talk at Hidden Earth I am giving 'How Caving Organisations are Changing'. We plan to follow this up with an article in Descent as well as more fleshed out plans circulated to Council.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Hidden Earth

RN adds that himself and Gethin have recently attended a meeting with Paul Donovan from Welsh Adventure Tourism, who are exploring ways to expand caving and adventure tourism in Wales. They are keen to engage with caving organisations. RN will pass a short report to Caving Wales about this.

RN will be at Hidden Earth and happy to talk to people about safe adventures and/ or incorporation.

6.1.2 Treasurer (Chris Bolton)

The period since the July Council meeting has been fairly quiet. I have been assisting with insurance queries, working on incorporation and have reviewed actual and expected expenditure against the budget for 2026.

Aidan and I have been refining the plans for incorporation following feedback at the AGM and I have recently met with solicitors for some advice on the way forward. That advice was free, but I anticipate we will need more detailed support and the amount I budgeted may not cover it. We plan to have more information available for members at Hidden Earth.

For the budget review, I am not aware of any major C&A projects and have assumed that total claims from the Regional Councils may be slightly under budget (£1k in total). T&E WG is not yet up to speed so I have assumed they will spend, at most, their base budget without contingencies, and have made the same assumption for Y&D WG, as not much has been spent so far. The Anchors WG, on the other hand, has been very active and has edged into the planned contingency, particularly as a result of the realisation that stocks of IC anchors are low, with an order for 650 more being made through CNCC. The total cost of the anchors was £5070, and I will book one third of this to the 2026 budget with the remainder in 2027 and 2028, reflecting when they are expected to be used.

The direct cost of the Annual Review was about £1.3k, plus some of Katie's time, most of which would have been spent on Library work so has not impacted the budget much. The trailer for the artificial cave needed new tyres at a cost of £150. On the plus side, our cyber insurance cost about £1.5k less than my budget estimate and the AGM costs were about £400 lower. We also expect about £1.5k more in bank interest as a result of rates staying high. QMC will probably return a surplus but for safety I am assuming no change from the budget. I'm increasing the estimate for Incorporation by £1.5k. Assuming that the motion below is accepted that will be a further £1.5k.

I've estimated these differences pessimistically and they add up to a small overspend of about £700 compared to the original budget. Therefore I have no concerns about the unplanned items. We are still broadly on course and will probably underspend by a few thousand.

BCA has been asked by the Derbyshire Section of CDG to assist with funding for a replacement compressor. Their previous compressor was worn out and uneconomic to repair. This was resulting in curtailment of diving activity in Derbyshire. The cost of a suitable compressor is approximately £7k and they are seeking £1.5k from each of BCA, DCA and BCRA, with the remainder being raised by CDG members. The Exec recommends that we make this grant for the overall benefit of caving.

Motion: To give a grant of £1,500 to the Derbyshire Section of CDG towards a new compressor.

Proposer: CJB, Seconder: MH

For: CJB, MH, AK, AR, RV, DJ, TR, LJW, IH, PJ, JP, TRY

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion passed.

At the next Council meeting I will table the draft budget for 2027. Between now and then I will be asking all WG Conveners and Regional Treasurers what they expect to spend, so please consider this. Membership fees will be unchanged so income will be similar to 2026 and if I don't have an estimate I'll assume something based on this year's budget and likely spend.

Nothing additional to the report raised at the meeting.

6.1.3 Secretary (Aidan Kuhlmann)

Since the last Council Meeting, I have been fairly inactive in terms of my specific ongoing jobs having been abroad and then flat-out with work on my return. Nevertheless, I have continued to be busy with a variety of enquiries:

- 1. AdVench** – *This is an outdoorsy type of social media/get-your guide type company who contacted us requesting whether some cherry-picked Cave Registry information or route descriptions etc could be shared with them. So far I have sent them a holding response and am planning on replying with a polite refusal and persuading them to point towards our sites, NewToCaving, etc. Council are invited to comment.*
<https://advencha.co/>
- 2. Fingal's Cave** – *I was contacted by a German journalist, and I have pointed him onto the National Trust for Scotland to better answer his queries.*
- 3. Spanish Campaign** – *I have been contacted by a Spanish campaign group looking to regulate caving following the death of a caving in Spain. The executive has discussed this and decided not to engage, it being a matter for our Spanish counterparts.*
- 4. Artificial Cave System** – *I have been contacted by a party looking to build an artificial cave system inside a four-story building. I have signposted them towards other members of the caving community and offered some advice myself. So far, they are in the investigative phase of this project, but I will hope it bears fruit as it could benefit the caving community.*

Additionally, I have been collaborating with by BCA colleagues regarding:

- preparations for the upcoming Hidden Earth,*
- helping Violet settle in as the new T&E Convenor,*
- authorising bank payments; and*

- working in the incorporation working group.

Finally, I would like to bring to Council's attention some worrying phishing emails we have recently been made aware of by a few different clubs. They appear to take the form of a general person emailing a club and offering to sell them BCA's membership mailing list and their contact details. We have no reason yet to believe they have access to this, and my personal suspicion is that it's a crafty phishing attempt to panic clubs/lure them in. A notice will be going out in the upcoming club newsletter, and this is a good reminder to all caving organisations and cavers to remain vigilant to digital threats.

AK adds that on Friday the 25th September he will be attending the BMC Student Safety Seminar, at Plas Y Brenin. This will be an opportunity to liaise with BMC about the approach to Organised Fun issues.

6.2 Regional Council & Representative Body Reports (Optional)

6.2.1 FoDCCAG (Ian Healey)

Training: Several regional training courses have been scheduled, and one completed – a 2 day surveying training course delivered by Mark Tringham for x participants.

Access: Redhouse Lane swallet is now open to visiting groups under the FoDCCAG permit system and permits and details are available from permits@fodccag.org.uk

Discoveries: recently another 600+m of passage has been found in Redhouse including the continuation of the streamway to a sump. Further information will be provided in a presentation at Hidden Earth as well as in a future film episode from the film series:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUthMiNiJDevXqxU6ZObg7Ulhld_eRQal&si=zPmsLSRJMU_LB0I

Total length of cave is now 12Km+

Equipment:

Modifications have been made to the entrance ladder pitches in Redhouse. BCA approved anchors have now been installed in Redhouse at key pitches –

- Wicked Route and Folly Route on the Wicked Pitch of the North
- Consolation Climb
- Stream Pitches 1 & 2

Next FoDCCAG Committee Meeting is 22/09/26

IH adds there is work ongoing on the permit system, but permits are available now.

6 people attended the 2 day survey training and there are plans to run the same course again next year.

6.2.2 DCA (Mike Higgins)

Not a lot to report over the quiet summer months. The concreting at the top of the shaft at Faucet Rake has been completed ready for the installation of the grill.

All the radon monitors have been successfully recovered with no problems and the results from UKHSA are now awaited.

Details of the new Cave and Mine Digging Support Fund are now up on the DCA website.

A bar was cut out of the gate to the lower entrance to Jug Holes by persons unknown, a rather pointless exercise as it's a lot easier to carry a Derbyshire Key than an angle grinder! This has now been replaced.

Consultation will start shortly regarding DCA's proposals for gating Suicide Cave.

DCA is providing a display at Pooles Cavern in Buxton for the International Day of Caves and Karst on 13th September.

MH adds DCA have now had the results of the recent radon monitoring back from UK Health security agency. A report will be prepared for the next DCA meeting on the 24th Oct. Pete Knight and Bob Mehew will help MH with this.

MH also reports DCA are getting quite a few responses to the consultation around a gate for Suicide cave. A decision on this will be made at the next DCA meeting.

RN requests an early copy of the Radon report, if possible.

6.2.3 Caving Wales (Allan Richardson)

Nothing to report.

AR adds there are still issues with NRW, Caving Wales are keeping an eye on the situation.

An NRW officer reported finding a very rare plant, Brittle Bladder Fern, at the newer entrance to Draenen. However it has turned out to be less rare than first thought and also present at OFD top entrance.

6.2.4 CNCC (Todd Rye)

The North has been ticking along nicely, with further bolting and exploration happening in Scanty Lardos, a sterling effort by the Mudminers.

Easegill open house was another grand success, so this is looking likely to be a long running feature of the caving calendar. Conservation projects are ongoing, and there is a period of no surface digging on Leck Fell at the request of the landowner, with cavers and diggers being encouraged to report any old digs that need to be made safe and stock proof.

There will be a talk at HE this year from our Projects officer about the projects undertaken and how they can be funded. Andrew does a lot of incredible work and I highly recommend going to his talk and see what you can learn! The CNCC is still looking for replacements for the chair and secretary role next year, so if you know anyone who would be a good fit for these roles, please get them in touch!

TR adds Scanty Lardos is now over 2km long and features a major streamway.

6.2.5 CSCC (Linda Wilson & Joshitha Shivkumar)

Conservation & Access Report - CSCC Meeting 17th August 2026

Please find below the Conservation & Access Officer's Report. This covers the period since the last meeting in May 2026.

Harridge Woods Caves

The access arrangements for Harridge Woods has been finalised. This included:-

- Implementing an online permit system
- Updating the CSCC Access Guide
- Fitting CSCC padlocks to the locked caves (Harridge Wood Hole and EMMC)
- Updating the trip report to include any Bat sightings

Many thanks to Cookie for helping install the padlocks.

Pressure Washers

The pressure washers have been returned by the Wealden Cave and Mine Society. They have been serviced and ready to be borrowed for any clean-up projects you may have.

CSCC Access Guide

Many minor updates have been made to the CSCC Access Guide, including:-

- The bookings calendar for the Cheddar caves is now displayed on the Cheddar Caves South page.
- Added a Harridge Woods Area page with links to an area map, the permit system and trip report page.
- Transferred a number of files onto the CSCC web site and updated the links.
- Transferred a number of Google forms from my personal account to the CSCC account.

Wookey Hole

All of the handlines in the rift down to Wookey 24 have been replaced, along with the associated maillons. A traverse line has been installed to guide cavers

over the floor holes where a recent rescue occurred. Many thanks for Duncan Price, Pete Hellier and Chris George for their help with this.

Reservoir Hole

The new SRT route, Ceiling Good, upto High Country has been rigged. The conservation tape at the base of the pitch has been modified to accommodate the pitch and the Conservation and Training Guide has also been updated. A new email group for the Cheddar Wardens has been created and used to inform them of the new Ceiling Good pitch and how it should be used.

Stock Hill Woods

I have had some initial conversations with the Forestry England ranger, Mark Maynard, concerning the caves within Stock Hill Woods. They are investigating how the entrance to Stocks House Mine can be made more secure but still permit access for bonafide cavers. I will continue the dialogue with them and, at present, there are no changes to the access arrangements.

Future Priorities

In the coming months I will be concentrating on the following priorities:-

- Progress the Spider Hole digging application with Longleat
- Complete the conversation work in Reservoir Hole
- Progress the new lids for Home Close and Stock Hill Mine Cave

If anyone has anything else they would like progressing then please let me know.

Wayne Starsmore, CSCC C&A Officer

Nothing raised at the meeting.

6.3 Working Group Convenor Reports

6.3.1 Anchor (Pete Knight)

Since my last report a new version of the Pre-Use Inspection of Resin Bonded Anchors document has been approved and published. This is an update to the guidance BCA provides cavers for the use of scheme resin anchors. This can be seen on the BCA website here: [Safety - British Caving Association](#).

I'd ask that the BCA media team schedule some posts about this document (UKCaving/FB etc..) to highlight it to the underground community.

With a busy summer in hand, little other progress has been made on our next goals, however in order of priority we will be moving on to tackle the following over the next year:

1. Old anchor removal guidance for scheme installers (based on the 27th July AWG workshop).
2. Guidance for installers who have been sent to follow up on defective anchor reports that have been sent in by cavers.

3. Guidance for the placement of scheme anchors in non-limestone rock types. This is already possible under the anchor policy, however the AWG feels some guidance for considering things like aggressive chemical environments and general substrate appropriateness could be beneficial as the scheme's anchors start to find their way into more mines.

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. I already have a meeting booked in for this evening, so I will not be able to attend myself.

AK adds the pre-AGM field meeting of the AWG was a great success.

6.3.2 Conservation & Access (Victoria Kocher)

Wales Update:

Stuart France reports that there are no significant new conservation projects at present, although a number of existing conservation, monitoring and access projects continue.

- **Ogof Draenen bat monitoring:** Lesser horseshoe bat activity has been monitored at two of the open entrances to Ogof Draenen from autumn through to spring using underground sensors recording hourly bat movements. There was a marked difference between the entrances, with relatively little activity recorded at the wetter entrance and considerably greater activity at the dry entrance. A summary is expected to appear in a future Chelsea Spelaeological Society newsletter. Stuart intends to consider repeating the monitoring over the coming winter.
- **Brittle Bladder Fern / NRW:** Natural Resources Wales raised concerns about the possibility of cavers damaging Brittle Bladder Fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*) while using a woodland access route to a cave. The species is not legally protected and has a widespread distribution. The matter does not appear to have progressed further. This may nevertheless be worth noting as an example of the potential interaction between surface conservation considerations and cave access.
- **Environmental governance in Wales:** Proposals in Wales include support for a **National Nature Service for Wales**, intended to increase environmental literacy, develop green skills and create employment associated with nature recovery. There are also proposals for an independent **Office for Environmental Governance Wales**, which would have a role in holding public authorities to account for environmental targets and nature-recovery commitments. The eventual relationship between these initiatives and the existing responsibilities of NRW may be worth monitoring from a cave conservation and access perspective.

Access and Cave Monitoring

- **Cave river telemetry:** Cave river-depth telemetry projects in South Wales continue to operate and develop. During the summer, a new depth

sensor and software upgrades were installed on the Dan-yr-Ogof monitoring system.

- **Near-live water-level information** continues to be made available online. These systems provide potentially valuable information to cavers when assessing water conditions and planning trips, as well as creating useful longer-term hydrological datasets.
- **Agen Allwedd–Daren Cilau:** Exploration continues towards a potential dry connection between Agen Allwedd and Daren Cilau. Progress is reportedly getting gradually closer to a link.

Forestry England

A separate issue has been raised by Wayne Starsmore, who is experiencing challenges with Forestry England locally and asked whether members of the C&A Working Group have useful contacts within Forestry England at a national or senior level.

The request was circulated to the Working Group and produced several potentially useful avenues of assistance:

- John (Mole) has experience of a previous national agreement and has offered to discuss this directly with Wayne.
- Mike may be able to assist through contacts associated with the Forest Plastics Working Group.
- Tim, Chair of FoDCCAG, has an established relationship with the Forest of Dean Area Manager, Tom Brockington, and may be able to assist once further details of the issue are available.
- Bob suggested drawing upon Caving Wales contacts with experience of negotiations in Wales.

The response highlights the usefulness of the C&A Working Group in sharing contacts and experience across regions. It may be worth considering whether BCA should maintain a central list of useful contacts within major national landowners and statutory organisations, such as Forestry England, Natural Resources Wales, Natural England and the National Trust.

International Conservation Information

There have also been several developments from European and international cave conservation organisations which may be useful to the Working Group.

The **European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC)** reports that its **Clean-Up the Dark** project now contains datasets relating to cleaned and polluted caves and karst from Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, France, Germany and the Basque Country. Other national organisations are being encouraged to contribute their own data. This could provide an opportunity for BCA and the regional councils to contribute information from UK cave-cleaning and pollution-removal projects and make this work more visible internationally.

The **UIS Karst and Cave Protection Commission (KCPC)** has launched a new cave-protection website bringing together conservation literature, information

on threatened caves and karst areas, and details of international conservation initiatives.

The UIS KCPC is also:

- seeking details of the organisations and individuals responsible for cave and karst conservation within national federations;
- encouraging countries to share cave and karst conservation information internationally;
- producing cave-protection and cave-cleaning material in connection with the International Day of Caves and Karst on 13 September, with material intended to be available for translation; and
- inviting countries to contribute a short overview of their caves and karst for an international Environmental Outlook initiative.

These initiatives could provide useful opportunities for BCA to share UK cave conservation work internationally. In particular, there may be value in linking the cave clean-ups being encouraged around 13 September with the ECPC Clean-Up the Dark project, so that conservation work undertaken by UK clubs and regional councils contributes to the wider European dataset.

Our next BCA C & AWG meeting:

- I have initiated a discussion requesting updates on conservation/access issues and asked to move the Conservation & Access Working Group (CAWG) meeting earlier than Sep 16, due to the Sep 15 Council meeting.
- Stuart suggested moving CAWG to Wed Sep 9.

VK notes C and A WG have rescheduled the next meeting, which is happening soon.

RN adds it is nice to see how busy C and A are across the regions.

6.3.3 Finance (BCA Treasurer)

See Treasurer's Report.

6.3.4 Incorporation (Chris Bolton)

See Treasurer's Report.

6.3.5 National Access (Rostam Namaghi)

See Chair's Report.

6.3.6 Publications & Information (Zac Woodford)

No report received.

ZW reports he has procured two roller banners, a table cloth and some stickers ready for Hidden Earth. ZW plans to be at HE early to set up the BCA stand.

ZW has produced a video for the International day of Caves and Karst, which is on the BCA facebook. He intends to sort a BCA youtube account and then

share the video on UKcaving.

ZW would like to thank Bartek for providing lots of footage.

RN asks Eve Chaddock (EC) for her thoughts on a BCA survey.

EC has compiled the last couple of BCA demographics reports, and has realised BCA could do with more data on their membership. She is working, with input from RN and ZW, on a survey to send to members. She hopes to send this pre- Christmas.

RN adds if any of the organisations within BCA have any info they would like to survey members on please pass it on to himself, ZW or EC.

6.3.7 Qualification Management Committee (Stephan Natynczuk)

The summer has been relatively quiet for QMC. In the background we work to keep our training and assessment role running smoothly, there are always minor tweaks and special cases to deal with to accommodate exceptional circumstances, mainly with CPD update workshops.

As always we are somewhat held back with access to quality sites for training and assessing leaders. The South Wales and CIC Panel in particular are struggling with access to OFD, even though the number of requested trips with already proficient cavers is very low. Rich Hill would like to try again for support from Council and his most recent letter is reproduced below.

"Dear BCA council

Access to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu for BCA Award training and Assessment

The South Wales local cave leader panel has for a long time (decades) struggled to run training and assessment for the BCA awards in the bigger systems of South Wales. A couple of years ago the Mynnydd Llangattock Cave Management Advisory Committee group (now managed by Caving Wales) gave the South Wales local cave leader panel permission to run BCA training and assessment courses in Agen Allwedd and Ogof Craig a Ffynnon. This has helped though it is not ideal. Both venues offer some sections of cave to train/assess some parts of the syllabus but they are both limited in other areas. Neither have good areas to train/assess navigation. Neither have good areas to train/assess ropework.

It is possible for other regions to train and assess cave leader and vertical leader in other regions, yet this does not often happen, what is essential however, is that candidates for the Cave Instructor Certificate (CIC) scheme are assessed in venues that they don't know. For this reason, it is common for cavers from other regions to be assessed for modules 1 and 2 of the CIC in South Wales. There are however only 1 or 2 people being assessed for CIC each year.

To be clear we are not asking for permission to take novice cavers into OFD, we are asking to be allowed to train and assess people that have expressed an interest in leading and introducing others to our sport. To be trained they already need to be active cavers, they will be trained and assessed by a CIC

holder who has been assessed to be a competent caver in a variety of venues across the UK (and who has caved abroad), who has showed professionalism in conservation and safety as well as technical ropework skills.

We have tried many approaches over the years to achieve this including face to face meetings with various OFD committees though all to no avail. We are also currently trying through the OFD access sub-committee. What QMC, particularly the South Wales panel, would like is for the BCA council to help open a doorway to meaningful conversation with the OFD committee.

Thanks

Rich Hill on behalf of the CIC Panel and South Wales Panel"

There is some discussion about CIC assessments in OFD and South Wales generally.

RN reminds the council that the BCA constitution prevents BCA getting involved in regional access issues, and this needs to be discussed with Caving Wales. AR indicates he is willing to respond to the email and will get in touch with SN directly.

RN adds he is happy to be involved, but only if both parties request it.

6.3.8 Training & Equipment (Violet Astle)

No report received.

VA reports the group have a meeting planned for the 30th September.

T and E have had a couple of grant applications from CNCC and EUG. VA is currently investigating the situation with the EUG application as it is unclear if that should go through T and E, or via BCRA.

6.3.9 Youth & Development (Isaac Neale)

At the end of May I was made aware (through browsing responses on a UKCaving thread) that the student caving club at the University of Nottingham was in an uncertain position, having had their access to their Kit Store restricted. After completing further research and reaching out to NUCC to offer support I discovered this was down to an unfortunate student death in the kayaking society and a subsequent HSE investigation. This was discussed briefly at the AGM. At the time I sent an email to the Nottingham SU however I was not to receive a response until July. In the interim period NUCC informed me that there had been a meeting between them and their SU, and that their SU was seeking out technical advisors with the goal of employing the Safe Adventures report guidance. A meeting was held between me and Nottingham SU on the 23rd of July.

It was clear there was nothing the BCA could do at the time to get the club re-instated. The trustees of the SU had made the decision that no club would be allowed to operate until every club had been assessed and checked off to some degree following the HSE guidance. I still took the opportunity to clarify the key points relating to student caving such as the peer-to-peer training

system and BCA insurance. This was appreciated by the SU as whilst the Safe Adventures report does make references towards some of these principles, it does not give instruction on how to actually apply and work with them. They were also pleased for me to offer myself as a technical advisor when they got around to checking their caving club, however they were uncertain if this would work as the HSE also had their own requirements for what a "technical advisor" was, separately to the Safe Adventures report.

A bit of good news, once again the caving community made a very good example of itself. One remark I am happy to pass on from the meeting was that the SU team had to reconsider their standards for an aware, well organised, and competently ran club upon turning their attention to NUCC. After the meeting I passed on relevant documents relating to student caving, for which they were happy to receive.

I was put in touch with the Nottingham SU Head of Student Communities who asked me how I would like to go about conducting the review of the club. References were made to personal skill assessment, and if I myself held any of the BCA qualifications. I re affirmed how the review process was not based around personal skill checks, but rather the mechanisms within the club to facilitate a peer review system. I also explained how I did not hold BCA qualifications, but how my experience and skillset was relevant and adequate for completing the technical review. Before getting back to me the Nottingham SU contacted at least one CIC asking them to perform direct skill/ technique assessment of members of NUCC. Fortunately, this was turned down, and the same talking points were explained as I had done.

I have now been sent all of NUCC's documents with the aim of completing the "technical advisor" review for their Students Union. It is a slightly daunting task, as what I do here will likely set a precedent for the Organised Fun matter going forwards. I had a chat with Rostam on this matter and I will also be creating a "caving CV" for myself to act as an easily shareable document highlighting my experience relevant to the role.

Alongside this I was also contacted by Imperial CCC, as their SU had also made a requirement of them that they find a technical advisor to complete a review of the club. This is to have been expected as Imperial's SU were closely involved with the original work with OF that became the Safe Adventures report later on. Interestingly however Imperial SU had said they would accept a technical advisor to be anyone who "had worked in caving for two years". I did respond to Imperial offering my services as similar to NUCC, however also asking for more detail on what the Imperial SU's requirements were, as they did not conform to anything publicised by OF or discussed in the Technical Advisor meetings. By the time I had received response ICCC had found an alternative party to complete the review. I was slightly concerned about this, as we had no idea who this third party was, what they knew about the situation, and what it may mean if they did end up assessing individual practical skills. Fortunately, the individual who filled the role of 'technical advisor' is acquainted to me after

we met at a caving event last year and I am getting in contact to discuss the situation.

IN adds he has completed and returned the technical advice form for Nottingham UCC to the students union and this has been accepted so NUCC can run trips again. However Nottingham SU then sent through a longer, more detailed form, that IN will complete and return. But it won't stop NUCC running trips.

IN has attempted to contact the person who provided technical advice for Imperial, but not heard back. He plans to track them down at Hidden Earth.

RN highlights that BCA are happy to help student clubs with technical advice. If anyone hears of student clubs struggling with this issue please put them in contact with IN.

IN is attending a meeting with Organised Fun on the 24th and hopes to learn where other groups technical advice has come from.

6.4 Additional Reports by Appointed Officers

6.4.1 British Caving Library (Jenny Potts)

Archive Material

The file of material from Eric Hensler (including the original pencil and ink survey drawn in 1937 of Hensler's Crawl, G.G.) is now on the Library website in the BCRA Online Archives. This includes a scan of the muddy notebook used at the time with Hensler's pencilled survey notes

Security

BCL has used money donated to the Library for "archive use" to buy a large fire-resistant cupboard. This will be used to house irreplaceable archive material and also some valuable, printed publications. Recent checks on material donated have disclosed some items which are very valuable and we are now checking values of all items donated.

Hidden Earth Library Stand

We have already sent out to BCA members and clubs lists of duplicate publications available in return for a donation. Some parcels have already been posted on, others have been parcelled up to be collected from the stand. We are taking lots of other items to Hidden Earth for the Library stand in the hopes of passing them on to other cavers in return for donations.

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)

No report received.

AK notes that JG has emailed apologies for not attending this meeting, as he is returning from the International Day of Caves and Karst in Slovenia. The UIS Bureau met during this event, and JG will report on it at the next BCA meeting. JG added that UIS thanked British cavers who organised events and videos for IDCK.

6.5 Reports by BCA Staff

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

Groups:

Since the last meeting BCA has had enquiries from 3 groups about joining/ re-joining.

Bloxham Underground Tunnel Society (BUTS) – are keen to join as a group member. They have paid their fee and promised to send a constitution very soon.

Nottingham Underground Digging and Exploration Society (NUDES) have sent their constitution and are keen to join but have yet to pay the fee.

Greenlaws Mining Project are keen to re-join. They were members in the past but haven't joined BCA for the last 3 years.

Individuals:

6482 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:

We have linked to the Howden microsite on the BCA website. I've also removed the old and out of date 92 FAQs from the website and replaced with a smaller number of membership based ones. Going forward all insurance based FAQs will be on the Howden microsite, rather than the BCA website.

Myself and CJB have also been involved in some discussions with BCRA about the use of 'temporary membership of BCA' for field meets. I'll plan to produce a written document soon to clarify how temporary membership of BCA can be used and in which situations.

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 compiled minutes for the last council meeting, the AGM and an Anchor WG meeting.

Nothing raised at the meeting

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: CJB, Seconder: MH

For: CJB, MH, AR, AK, RV, DJ, TR, LJW, IH, PJ, JP, TRY

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion passed.

8.0 Matters arising from the previous Council Meeting

Nothing raised at the meeting

9.0 Items for Discussion

Nothing raised at the meeting

10.0 Any Other Business

Nothing raised at the meeting

11.0 Details of the Next Meeting

To be decided.

The Exec will look at a date and send it around ASAP, but likely to be November (ish).