



**British  
Caving  
Association**

**The 2018 Annual General Meeting**

of the:

**British Caving Association**

will be held at:

The Dean Field Studies Centre,

Parkend

Forest of Dean

GL15 4JA

On

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018 at 10:30am

# AGENDA

## British Caving Association Annual General Meeting Agenda – 2018

1. Chair's Welcome
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Applications for Group Membership
4. Minutes of 2017 Annual General Meeting (*available from BCA website*)
  - 4.1. Proposal that they be confirmed as a true record
  - 4.2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 2017 AGM

### Officers' and Assistant Officer Annual Reports

### Report by

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 5. Chair  | Andy Eavis    |
| 6. Secretary  | Nick Williams |
| 7. Treasurer  | Robin Weare   |
| 8. Conservation & Access<br><i>including:</i> CRoW Liaison (Tim Allen)  | Andrew Hinde  |
| 9. Equipment & Techniques<br><i>including:</i> Rope Testing (Bob Mehew)   | Mark Sims     |
| 10. Training  | Nigel Atkins  |
| 11. Publications & Information<br><i>including:</i> Webmaster (David Cooke)<br>Web Services (David Cooke)<br>Newsletter Editor (David Rose) | Les Williams  |
| 12. Legal & Insurance<br><i>including: Insurance Manager</i> (Nick Williams)  | (Vacant)      |

### Other Annual Reports

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 13. Membership Administrator  | Wendy Williams |
| 14. Q.M.C. (Qualifications Management Com.)   | Phil Baker     |
| 15. Cave Registry Co-ordinator  | David Cooke    |
| 16. IT Working Party  | David Cooke    |
| 17. Youth & Development   | Rostam Namaghi |
| 18. International Representative<br><i>including:</i> FSE Representative (Ged Champion) | Andy Eavis     |
| 19. British Caving Library  | Jenny Potts    |
| 20. Safeguarding Officer  | Chris Boardman |
| 21. Constituent Bodies, Regional Councils etc.  | (Various)      |

## **Election of Officers**

- 22.1. Chairman (three year term ends 2021)
  - *Les Williams, proposed by Alan Butcher, seconded by Jenny Potts, elected by default*
- 22.2. Secretary (three year term ends 2019) (Nick Williams acting)
  - *no nominations received by the deadline (see note 1)*
- 22.3. Treasurer (three year term ends 2020) (Robin Weare acting)
  - *no nominations received by the deadline (see note 1)*
- 22.4. Conservation and Access Officer (three year term ends 2019)
  - *(no election required - Andrew Hinde in post until end of term)*
- 22.5. Equipment and Techniques Officer (three year term ends 2020)
  - *Mark Sims nominated by Council, elected by default (see note 1)*
- 22.6. Legal and Insurance Officer (three year term ends 2020)
  - *vacant, no nominations received by the deadline (see note 1)*
- 22.7. Publications and Information Officer (three year term ends 2020)
  - *Les Williams resigning, no nominations received by the deadline (see note 1)*
- 22.8. Training Officer (three year term ends 2021)
  - *Nigel Atkins nominated by Council, elected by default (see note 1)*
- 22.9. Club Representatives (up to 4 posts)
  - *David Cooke and Bernie Woodley - both two year term due to expire in 2019*
  - *Idris Williams and John Hine - both two year term expires at this AGM.*
  - *no nominations received by the deadline (see note 1).*
- 22.10. Individual Representatives (up to 4 posts)
  - *Mark Richardson and Will Burn - both two year term due to expire in 2019*
  - *Pete Hall and Matt Wire - both two year term expires at this AGM*
  - *no nominations received by the deadline (see note 1).*

## **Constitutional Amendments**

23. None received by the deadline.

## **Motions for discussion (see attached papers)**

24. Working Group to establish BCA future vision and strategy
25. Appointment of a technical adviser to set up remote access to meetings
26. Electronic voting
27. Rename Training Committee and Training Officer
28. Training Committee terms of reference
29. Establishment of Youth and Development standing committee
30. Disbanding of the Legal and Insurance standing committee

## **Other business**

31. Appointment of Independent Examiner
32. Date of Annual General Meeting for 2019
33. Any other Business notified in advance to the Chairman

**Notes:**

1. Where nominations for elected posts have been received by the due date in advance of the meeting and there is only one nominee identified on the Agenda above, that person is deemed to be elected unopposed. Nominations for other posts may be made from the floor at the meeting.
2. Limited numbers of paper copies of all documents will be available at the Annual General Meeting. Attendees are advised to bring their own copies if possible.

**Representation and Voting at the BCA AGM 2018**

Voting is limited to DIMs, CIMs, CIM Plus, Honorary Members, Clubs and Access Bodies who have paid their subscriptions for 2018 plus Constituent Bodies and Regional Councils.

- Voting for or the election of Officers, Chairmen of Standing Committees and members of National Council is by a show of hands of those present who are eligible to vote.
- Voting on all other motions takes place on each motion twice: firstly all Individual Members present vote, and secondly all Groups (Clubs, Access Controlling Bodies, Regional Councils & Constituent Bodies) vote. A majority is required in both votes for the motion to be passed.
- Constituent Bodies, Regional Councils, Access Controlling Bodies and Clubs may each send one voting delegate to the AGM. Other cavers are welcome to attend as observers but may not take part in a formal vote at the Group stage.
- No one person may act as a delegate for more than one Group member.
- Group delegates must present a letter of authorisation signed by the Secretary, Chairman or Treasurer of the Constituent Body, Regional Council Access Controlling Body or Club. This should be handed to the appointed BCA teller.
- Individual Members who wish to vote must present their membership card.

**Officer's reports and other meeting papers**

Papers for the meeting, including officer's reports, previous minutes etc. will be available from the BCA website at [http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=general\\_meetings:2018\\_agm](http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=general_meetings:2018_agm) not less than 7 days before the meeting.

## Motions for discussion

### **Agenda Item 8: BCA policy statement on the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)**

1. *The British Caving Association holds the opinion that the CRoW Act already permits access for recreational caving. (Note: this view has been verified by the legal opinion of Dinah Rose QC and supported by many external organisations and individuals as well as its own members).*
2. *The access principles of the CRoW Act are in accord with BCA's own principles of improving access to caves. The BCA encourages caving bodies who have control of access to caves on 'access land' to renegotiate access agreements to reflect the rights provided by the CRoW Act.*
3. *The conservation of caves is important. The BCA Conservation Code applies to all caves regardless of the land designation. The BCA agrees with the CRoW guiding principle of the least restrictive option to meet the conservation or safety need.*
4. *The BCA believe that any particular conservation concerns on CRoW 'access land' can be adequately dealt with by those means already set out in the legislation. The BCA recognise that many of the concerns raised prior to the introduction of the Act never materialised and access to caves should be no different.*
5. *The BCA will support cavers in their work to develop access to caves on CRoW access land.*

Proposed by: National Council

### **Agenda item 24: Working group to establish BCA future vision and strategy**

BCA has struggled to attract new officers and particularly to inspire a new generation of cavers to get involved with the organisation. Some major reforms are needed if BCA is to thrive in the future.

BCA find it difficult to fill officer positions as they become vacant and officers are forced to sit in those positions longer than they would like or is good for the organisation. Attracting young or new blood into the roles has proven very difficult. There may be a number of reasons for this, disinterest, a dominance of the old guard, a distinct lack of vision and some criticism that the BCA is dysfunctional. Whatever it is there are few positive aspects of involvement with BCA and these all contribute to the BCA being seen in a very negative light by those who could get more involved.

BCA never appears to be leading, the tail always seems to be wagging the dog. Reacting to issues dominates business where a proactive agenda would be more attractive. There is no vision that cavers can identify with and get behind. Moving forward in a positive direction would encourage participation in the organisation by a new generation.

Setting a new simple mission statement and vision should be a first step. Developing a strategy of how to get there, reviewing the cumbersome BCA structure to see if it is fit for the future and finally rewriting parts of the constitution where needed should follow.

Tinkering with the edges will not inspire new interest in BCA. Positive reform will. Therefore I propose the following motion:

*"BCA to establish a 'working group' to determine a new mission and vision for the organisation. To outline a strategy to achieve this vision and make recommendations for any changes to the organisations structure and constitution. The group should be made up of a majority of younger cavers from the constituent bodies, regions and membership under an established convener agreed by council. The group should aim to be established within six months (by the January council meeting) and should report on recommendations to the 2020 AGM."*

Proposed by: Tim Allen

### **Agenda item 25: Appointment of a technical adviser to set up remote access to meetings**

Improving participation, engagement and fairness are key factors in motion (1) and the objective of this motion (2). Travelling for six hours in a car for a BCA council meeting does not encourage engagement with the organisation,

especially as meetings can take all day and, let's face it, be pretty dull. In the past choosing a fixed central location for a national meeting made the best of a bad job. This is fine for those who live relatively close but deters those who live further away. Travel from the Peak, Mendip, London, S Wales involves up to two hours travel each way. It is over three hours each way from Plymouth for the Devon & Cornwall representatives.

The country's largest caving region is underrepresented at BCA and yet it has a thriving regional council. It is over three hours each way to travel from Ingleton or York. Five to eight hours from the Scottish areas which CNCC also represent. Who would want to engage with BCA from Scotland?

The cumbersome structure of BCA has over forty representatives with a role on council. These should come from across the national area and it is important that everything is done to facilitate attendance of all representatives at meetings.

Technology is obviously the answer here offering a wide variety of possible solutions. Many cavers, probably in their working lives, will have come across these systems in action. Attendance from home or local hubs via an audio or video link would solve the problem and lead to improved participation and better representation in BCA council meetings. When technology allows council members to attend meetings remotely then the physical location of that meeting is less important and it can move from a central location. Once established the council meetings could rotate around the regions and be better synchronised with regional meetings. This could create improvements in the relationship between the national body and regional councils. Therefore I propose the following motion:

*"BCA to appoint or employ a technical advisor with a specific mandate to introduce an audio/visual technological solution which allows council members remote access to meetings. This access should allow members to participate at a similar level to those attending in person. A working system should be in place within one year."*

Proposed by: Tim Allen

### **Agenda item 26: Electronic voting**

The BCA AGM is an important part of the governance of the organisation. In line with motion (1&2) improving engagement and participation of the membership is key to a healthy organisation.

In the past the BCA AGM was held in the same central location as council meetings. Unfortunately the only people who attended were the council members. Six years ago it was decided to move the AGM around the regions which hosted a 'party weekend' in the hope that it would encourage a wider attendance. On some occasions this has worked but numbers are still very limited. Usually you get the same 20-25 council members who normally attend meetings and then perhaps another 20-25 cavers mostly from the local region. These small numbers mean that out of a membership approaching 6000 an unhealthy influence can be had on policy from just a few, perhaps regionally biased, cavers. This is not good for the organisation's democracy especially when the AGM has only been to the north once in six years!

The tedium of a meeting and the distance of travel are not conducive to encouraging engagement. However the proposed technological solutions for council meetings are not suitable to encourage several hundred members to engage with the AGM. The key business of the AGM is electing officers and voting on motions and it is voting which needs to be made more accessible for all the members.

Last year a motion on proxy voting failed. That motion had little support from council and the exec and no attempt was made to improve the motion to better suit the organisation. It was, at least, an attempt to address this issue and should be applauded. A better solution is electronic voting similar to that already used in the 2017 ballot. If motions and nominations were received by the council meeting prior to the AGM then there is a minimum of six weeks to run an electronic vote and count. This would make AGMs far more efficient and as this becomes a formal annual process preparations can be made well in advance. Therefore I propose the following motion:

*"The BCA to investigate a process of electronic voting on motions and nominations properly presented to the Annual General Meetings. This process to be founded upon that used for the 2017 ballot but with greater use of professional help. The process, and any constitutional changes required to implement it, to be presented to the 2019 AGM with a view to full implementation at the 2020 AGM."*

Proposed by: Tim Allen

### **Agenda item 27: Rename Training Committee and Training Officer**

*That Training Committee is re-named as 'Recreational Training Committee' and the officer post is renamed to 'Recreational Training Officer'.*

Proposed by: National Council

### **Agenda item 28: Training Committee terms of reference**

*That the Training Committee be responsible for:*

- *All matters relating to recreational caver training including the administration of recreational caver training grants.*
- *The provision of non-mandatory training guidelines for use by caving clubs, recreational cavers and groups.*
- *All other training related matters excluding those associated with the BCA award schemes and the QMC.*
- *An overview of BCA training policy, in conjunction with the QMC and the BCA National Council.*

*The detail of responsibilities and operations shall be confirmed by BCA National Council.*

Proposed: Alan Butcher, seconded Nick Williams

### **Agenda item 29. Establishment of Youth and Development Standing Committee**

*That the BCA form a standing committee, known as the 'Youth and Development' committee, or abbreviated to Y&D Committee. This shall replace the existing co-opted position of Youth and Development officer, and take on the role and members of the Youth and Development working party. The new committee will be headed by the Youth and Development Officer (abbrv. Y&D Officer). The budget of the Y&D Committee shall be rolled over from the existing youth and development budget.*

*This committee shall work to represent the interests of all young cavers, including both student cavers, and those under the age of 18 (such as those in scout teams). Aims of the committee will include (but are not limited to): assisting the formation of new university clubs and scout caving teams; improving access for under 18s; liaising with university unions and guilds; and generally improving the lot of younger cavers.*

Proposed: David Botcherby, seconded: Les Williams

Replacing the Y&D working party with a standing committee gives a more permanent nature to the work being done by its members, and gives a voting position on the national council to the Y&D Officer. As a standing committee, the Y&D Committee will be open to representatives from each Regional Caving Council and National Body of the BCA. The Y&D Committee will also have the ability to co-opt experts at their discretion, their business being their own to conduct.

Forming a Y&D Committee would reaffirm the BCA's commitment to their younger members, recognising their specific needs, which differ from those of the general membership. Working to represent younger cavers is an imperative of the BCA, and continuing the good work of the youth and development working group into the future will ensure this.

### **Agenda item 30: Disbanding of the Legal and Insurance standing committee**

The L&I standing committee is a throwback to the days of the NCA. There has never been a formal meeting of the L&I Committee since the creation of BCA. Insurance matters have been dealt with almost exclusively by myself acting in the Council appointed role of PL Scheme Manager and legal matters have been dealt with by an individual officer with little reference to Council or the Executive.

The October Council meeting agreed a motion *"To delete the post of 'Legal & Insurance Officer' & split the role into two posts"* and the January 2018 Council meeting agreed *"As required, the Executive seek the opinion of one, or more, currently practising legal professional for legal matters, as they arise"*. However, as a standing committee, it is not in the gift of Council to appoint (or remove) the L&I Officer who heads the L&I Committee, this is a matter for the AGM.

Disbanding the L&I Committee will simply regularise the situation agreed by Council and reduce the bureaucracy surrounding the appointment of officers to deal with insurance and legal matters. Council can then deal with these matters as and when they need to.

I therefore propose that:

*The Legal and Insurance Standing Committee be disbanded and Council be empowered to appoint officers to deal with legal and insurance matters as they arise.*

NB: the status and operation of standing committees is defined in the constitution but the actual creation of standing committees is a matter for the AGM, and hence this is not a proposal to amend the constitution.

Proposed: Nick Williams.