



**British
Caving
Association**

The Annual General Meeting

of the:

British Caving Association

will be held at:

Horton in Ribblesdale Village Hall

on:

Sunday 9 June 2019, 10:30 am.

AGENDA

British Caving Association

Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. Chairman's Welcome
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Applications for Group Membership
4. Minutes of 2018 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 2018 AGM

Officers' Annual Reports

Report by

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 5. Chairman | Les Williams |
| 6. Acting Secretary <i>including:</i> Insurance Manager (Howard Jones) & Safeguarding Officer (Chris Boardman) | Robin Weare |
| 7. Acting Treasurer | Howard Jones |
| 8. Conservation & Access <i>including:</i> CRoW (David Rose) | Andrew Hinde |
| 9. Equipment & Techniques <i>including:</i> Rope Testing (Bob Mehew) | Mark Sims |
| 10. Training | Nigel Atkins |
| 11. Youth & Development | Rostam Namaghi |
| 12. Publications & Information (Acting) <i>including:</i> Webmaster (David Cooke) Web Services (David Cooke) News Editor (David Rose) | Les Williams |

Other Annual Reports

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 13. Membership Administrator | Wendy Williams |
| 14. Qualifications Management Committee | Juliet Parker-Smith |
| 15. Cave Registry | David Cooke |
| 16. IT | David Cooke |
| 17. Vision & Constitution | Hellie Adams |
| 18. International <i>including:</i> FSE (Ged Campion) | Andy Eavis |
| 19. Media-Liaison | Andy Eavis |
| 20. British Caving Library | Jenny Potts |
| 21. Constituent Bodies, Regional Councils etc. | various |

Elections

22. Election of Officers and National Council Members
 - 22.1. Honorary President (one year term)
Nomination: Mick Day, proposed by BCA Council
 - 22.2. Secretary (three year term ends 2022)
Nomination: Matt Ewles, proposed by G. Douthwaite, seconded by H. Jones
 - 22.3. Treasurer (balance of a three year term ends 2020)
Nomination: Howard Jones, proposed by R. Weare, seconded by L. Williams
 - 22.4. Publications & Information Officer (balance of a three year term ends 2020)
Nomination: Jane Allen, proposed by H. Adams, seconded by N. Atkins
 - 22.5. Conservation & Access Officer (3 year term ends 2022)
Nomination: Louise Baddeley, proposed by A. Hinde, seconded by J. Potts
- As there is only one nominee for each of the above roles that person is elected.*

Candidates were invited to provide a brief election statement of a maximum of 300 words in length (to be used in the event of multiple nominations). As there are multiple nominations for the posts set out below the election statements are included if provided.

- 22.6. Two Individual Member Representatives (two year term ends 2021) and one Individual Member Representative to fill the vacancy created by Louise Baddeley's appointment as Conservation & Access Officer (balance of two year term ends 2020)

Nominations:

Tony Brocklebank, proposed by J Walker, seconded by S Morton

Statement: After thirty five years of exploring underground if elected I'd welcome the opportunity to contribute to the future development of caving in the UK.

David Cooke, proposed by C Roe, seconded by A Radmall

No statement received

Philip Rowsell, proposed by H Adams, seconded by P Swire

No statement received

- 22.7. Two Club Member Representatives (two year term ends 2021)

Nominations:

Helen Adams, proposed by L Baddeley, seconded by J Potts

Statement: I feel caving is an important sport and I hope to be able facilitate it a good way. I will try and represent members to the best of my ability

David Cooke, proposed by C Roe, seconded by A Radmall

No statement received

Gary Douthwaite, proposed by M Ewles, seconded by A McLeod

Statement: I am a member of three clubs (YUCPC, YCC, NPC) and wish to stand for the position of BCA Club Representative at the 2019 AGM. I do so encouraged by, and supportive of, efforts for BCA modernisation.

Other Matters

23. **Council's Proposals** – proposed on behalf of BCA Council by Les Williams and seconded on behalf of BCA Council by Robin Weare

23.1 That the Equality and Diversity Policy set out in appendix 1 be adopted

23.2 That the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines set out in appendix 2 be adopted

23.3 That the Policy on the correct handling and safekeeping of DBS certificate information set out in appendix 3 be adopted

23.4 That the Policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders to supervise young people set out in appendix 4 be adopted

23.5 That the Bullying and Harassment Policy set out in appendix 5 be adopted

23.6 That the Serious Incident Policy set out in appendix 6 be adopted

24. Proposals for the adoption of Standing Committee terms of reference

24.1 That the Terms of Reference of the Equipment & Techniques Standing Committee be:

to coordinate and administer the anchor program, and additionally to test equipment for caving use, produce and update as necessary guidelines for the use of fixed aids and for the care and maintenance of equipment.

Proposed by Mark Sims, seconded by Stephan Natynczuk

24.2 That the Terms of Reference of the Conservation & Access Standing Committee be:

- To produce guidelines and promotional materials to encourage conservation of underground environments;
- to assist regional councils when requested;

- to campaign nationally to encourage conservation and improved access in line with BCA policy and constitution; and
- to undertake other conservation or access related work as may be agreed by the committee.

Proposed by Andrew Hinde, seconded by John Hine

24.3 That the Terms of Reference of the Training Standing Committee be:

- The organisation of training, club and regional training events and the administration of training grants. (other than for BCA awards administered by the QMC)
- Liaison with other BCA Committees including E&T and C&A on matters affecting training and, where necessary, the dissemination of information relating to training to cavers, clubs and regional councils.
- Liaising with regional councils and other bodies to address matters relating to training as they arise.
- Promoting training for cavers and clubs by way of good practice on effective training methods, such guidelines to be provided on a non-mandatory basis.
- Liaising with the QMC on matters of training when required.
- Responsible in association with the QMC and BCA National Council in formulating and maintaining an effective training policy.
- Representing, within established protocols, matters of training and training process raised by any major incident involving cavers.

Proposed by Nigel Atkins, seconded by Stephan Natynczuk

24.4 That the Terms of Reference of the Publications & Information Standing Committee be:

The prime function of the P&I Standing Committee is to ensure that all publications BCA are accurate and legally, morally and grammatically compliant and that BCA copyright is protected. It will also bring together representatives and individuals with interest and/or expertise to facilitate the following facets of the BCA, as well as considering what areas within these facets the BCA should be developing in the future:

- Website
- Social media
- Publicity
- Promotion and marketing
- Publications
- Media liaison
- News

Proposed by Les Williams, seconded by Jenny Potts

25. Proposals from members which will not involve changes to the constitution if approved

25.1 that the BCA membership approve Jane Allen's 'new to caving' leaflet for production and publication (subject to updating of the logo).

Proposed by Matt Ewles, seconded by Gary Douthwaite

25.2 that the BCA AGM vote on which logo to use for the long-term future, and the new logo (a silhouette caver on Dollytubs ledge), presented separately, is considered as one of the options".

Proposed by Matt Ewles, seconded by Gary Douthwaite

25.3 That the AGM appoints Gary Douthwaite as the BCA webmaster, with immediate effect, and with a mandate to redevelop the website including, but not limited to BCA online and communications systems, and that Gary is provided with the necessary accesses and mandates as outlined in Appendix 7 to fulfil this role."

Proposed by Matt Ewles, seconded by Tim Allen

For further information and detail concerning these proposals see appendix 7.

26. Proposals from members which will involve changes to the constitution if approved

26.1 that the P&I is abolished as a Standing Committee and replaced with a new position on the Executive; the Publications and Information Officer, with responsibility for autonomously overseeing the outward facing publicity, promotion and information side of BCA function including all current functions of the P&I committee and that 6.1 and 6.14 of the constitution be amended to read

6.1. The Association shall have the following officers: a Council Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, **Publication and Information Officer**, together with Chairmen of the Standing Committees (Section 7), who shall be elected from the membership of the Association at an Annual General Meeting, by a show of hands of those present who are eligible to vote. Here the two-house voting system outlined in sub section 8.9 will not apply. Each officer shall serve for a term of three years from the AGM. One third of Officers' posts in turn shall be eligible for election or re-election each year and those elected shall serve for a term of three years from the AGM.

6.14. The Executive of the Association shall consist of the Council Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, **Publication and Information Officer**, and other Members as may be deemed necessary by the National Council to carry out the administrative business of the Association. The Executive Committee shall operate under the direction of and shall report to the National Council. It shall regulate its own business within the constraints of the Association's "Manual of Operations".

Proposed by Jane Allen, seconded by Tim Allen

For further information and detail concerning these proposals see appendix 8

26.2 that the constitution be amended as set out and explained in appendix 9

Proposed by Matt Ewles, seconded by Gary Douthwaite

Other Business

27. Appointment of Independent Examiner
28. Date of Annual General Meeting for 2020
29. 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 2019

Voting is limited to DIMs, CIMs, Honorary Members, Clubs and Access Bodies who have paid their subscriptions for 2019 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.

A proposed constitutional amendment shall be taken as succeeding if a 70% majority of votes cast for the motion is obtained in each vote, otherwise the motion shall fail. A constitutional amendment adopted by the meeting will require ratification by a ballot.

- 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:2019_agm not less than 7 days before the meeting.

Appendix 1

Equality and Diversity Policy

Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out the British Caving Association's (BCA's) approach to equality and diversity in its membership and at its workplaces. The BCA is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the membership and enhance the way we work.

1.2 The BCA aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout, in the recruitment, training and development of members, and to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination

Equality and Diversity at the BCA

1.3 In the BCA, we consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups both in membership, and to services.

1.4 We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for the BCA too.

1.5 The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all members and others employed under a contract of service.

1.6 You have personal responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of your membership, you are expected to read and familiarise yourself with this policy, and ensure that this policy is properly observed.

1.7 This policy is also of particular relevance to those concerned with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and decisions which affect others.

The BCA's Commitment

1.8 Every member is entitled to an environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. The BCA will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against a member, trainer or other because of a protected characteristic:

1.9 Sex; gender identity or reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin); disability; sexual orientation; religion and/ or belief; and age.

1.10 All BCA members will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities in the BCA. Selection for position, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

1.11 No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with a trusted member of the caving community such as a senior member of your caving club, a BCA committee member or any other member in a relevant position of seniority. You may decide in the alternative to raise the matter through the BCA's Harassment Policy or Grievance Policy.

1.12 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. The BCA will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by the BCA as a result. However, false allegations of

a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under BCA's Discipline Policy.

1.13 BCA members may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

Appendix 2

Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines

Introduction

Whether clubs wish to allow young people or vulnerable adults to use club facilities or attend club activities is a matter for each club to decide. That said, for caving to continue to attract an active and enthusiastic membership, making it possible for youngsters and vulnerable adults to take part would be a very valuable step. This policy sets out how clubs can do this, how they can safeguard children and vulnerable adults, and what to do if there is a suspicion of abuse.

Policy statement

For the purposes of this policy,

- A child is someone under the age of 18.
- A vulnerable adult is someone who may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The British Caving Association acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. The BCA is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice.

The BCA recognises that the welfare and interests of children or vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children and vulnerable adults:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of caving in an environment that is appropriate to their needs
- are protected from abuse whilst caving or using club facilities, or outside of caving for example whilst using social media with club members

The BCA acknowledges that some children or vulnerable adults, including disabled people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy the BCA will

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with resources to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children or vulnerable adults.
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.

- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

This policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for all BCA members. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and could ultimately result in exclusion from the BCA.

Raising awareness

BCA is keen to encourage member clubs to offer activities for young people and vulnerable adults. The BCA has a 'good practice' document which is an appendix to this safeguarding policy. When the policy is introduced, the policy will be widely publicised on the BCA website and in publications, and the good practice document will be promoted to all members. In addition there are Guidelines for clubs which set out practical measures for dealing with safeguarding.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by any bodies that provide grant aid to the BCA or member clubs
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, which may include the following people:

- BCA Safeguarding Officer
- The relevant Club's Officers
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/Police
- BCA Council members
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)
- If a club member's privileges are suspended or revoked, it is possible that officers of other clubs will also have to be informed

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Clubs wishing to offer activities for children or vulnerable adults

There are three scenarios:

- a) Parents are present and supervise their child, or a vulnerable adult related to them. Or,
- b) Parents entrust their child or relative's care to a responsible adult who is well known to the family. Or,
- c) The club undertakes to care for a child, in which case appropriate vetting steps including a DBS check are required for the adults directly involved in that care.

So that everyone is clear about how this works, there is a **consent form** appended to this policy, which parents are required to sign. A separate document provides detailed **guidelines for clubs**, and all BCA members should comply with the '**good practice**' document.

Types of abuse

Abuse can fall into the following categories

Physical

This includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, giving the wrong (or no) medication, restraining someone or only letting them do certain things at certain times.

Sexual

This involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, taking sexual photographs, making a child or vulnerable adult look at pornography or watch sexual acts, or sexual assault.

Psychological

This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, depriving someone of contact with someone else, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, putting pressure on someone to do something, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

Financial or material

This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, putting pressure on someone about their financial arrangements (including wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions) or the misuse or stealing of property, possessions or benefits.

Discriminatory

This includes types of harassment or insults because of someone's race, gender or gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Neglect and acts of omission

This includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to educational services, or not giving someone what they need to help them live, such as medication, enough nutrition and heating.

Bullying

BCA has a separate policy which defines bullying and sets out possible actions to take.

Possible Signs of Abuse

The BCA acknowledges that its members are not experts at recognising abuse. The BCA therefore expects members to discuss any concerns they may have with regard to the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult immediately with the person in charge (see section 'What You Should Do Next'). If this is not practical and the situation is deemed to be too serious to delay then advice can be sought from Social Services or the Police.

It is important to recognise that some children or vulnerable adults may have additional vulnerabilities and may face additional barriers or difficulties in communicating any concerns or problems because of their race, gender, age, abilities, religion, sexual orientation, or political persuasion. Members need to recognise this and be particularly sensitive should concerns be raised by such children or vulnerable adults or in relation to them.

Below are listed some of the characteristics which may be evidence of abuse. These are by no means exhaustive and are only indicators of potential abuse, **not** confirmation.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to injury.
- An injury of which the explanation seems inconsistent and /or the child or vulnerable adult is unwilling to discuss.
- The child or vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them.

- Unexplained behaviour changes e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty making friends.
- A child or vulnerable adult being prevented from socialising
- Displaying variation in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Becoming increasingly unkempt or dirty.

It must be recognised that the presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that actual abuse is taking place. **It is not** the responsibility of BCA members to decide whether abuse is occurring, **but it is their responsibility to act upon any concerns** (see section ‘What You Should Do Next’).

Advice to members

How to Respond to a Disclosure, Suspicion or Allegation

A child or vulnerable adult in your care may indicate to you that they are being abused in some way or information may come to you of possible abuse. On receiving this information you should:

- React calmly: do not rush into inappropriate action. What you are told may be very shocking but it is important you give the child or vulnerable adult some stability;
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they are not to blame and that they did the right thing to tell someone, i.e. you, about the incident;
- Take the child or vulnerable adult seriously and listen carefully to them. Recognise how difficult it was for them to tell you;
- Only ask questions which help to clarify the situation. Do not question any more than is strictly necessary, and avoid asking leading questions.
- If possible allow only one adult to talk to the child or vulnerable adult to begin with.
- Try not to make the child or vulnerable adult repeat their account unnecessarily;
- Do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain that you may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening but that you will endeavour to keep the incident as confidential as possible; and
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard or seen as soon as possible, using the BCA safeguarding incident report form.
- Notify your club’s chair or other senior committee member
- Notify BCA’s National Safeguarding Officer
- If criminal behaviour is suspected, then either you or a member of your club’s committee should make a referral to police or social services.

Do not:

- Take sole responsibility for further action (see section ‘What You Should Do Next’ on Page 13)
- Approach or try to contact the alleged abuser
- Ignore what has happened
- Make promises you cannot keep
- In cases of suspected criminal behaviour, it is not your job, nor that of club or BCA officers, to investigate

What happens if you are accused of an abusive action

In the event of an accusation:

- Make notes of all your actions/contacts with the child or vulnerable adult in question as soon as possible.
- Seek access to professional and legal advice.
- Ensure that you are no longer working with the child/children or vulnerable adults making the allegation.
- Follow the procedures laid out in the Safeguarding Policy and supporting documents.
- Accept that colleagues may not be in a position to discuss the matter with you while the investigation is underway.
- Accept that you may be barred from club premises or club activities when children or vulnerable adults are present.

Such events are difficult for all concerned. The BCA will do its utmost to remain impartial in all matters relating to an accusation. The main concern with any incident is the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult. For an

individual against whom an allegation has been made this will be a difficult time. It is important that you seek help and support.

Responding to allegations – actions for clubs and BCA

There are many possible scenarios. Here are some examples:

- Criminal behaviour is suspected. In this event a referral to police or social services must be made, either by the person first discovering the situation, or by a club officer. That referral must be made promptly, ie within a few hours.
- A club may become aware of an allegation or investigation taking place, that is entirely unrelated to the club, but involves a club member, outside of a club setting.
- Club member(s) may have concerns about the behaviour of a club, that don't appear to be criminal, but which do need to be investigated

Protection of children and vulnerable adults whilst an investigation is underway

Clearly, clubs have a duty of care and so must act to protect children and vulnerable adults in one of the two following ways.

Limited suspension

This involves barring a club member from using club facilities or participating in club activities, where children or vulnerable adults are expected to be present. However, the club member may continue with activities when children or vulnerable adults are not expected to be present.

To put this in context, if someone is under investigation by police for possession of illegal images of children, such investigations generally last many months and involve considerable stress on all involved. Being able to continue with leisure activities during this time, where those activities do not involve youngsters, would be of great value to someone who is under investigation.

Given that many BCA member clubs have only limited amounts of activity by children, the club may determine that it is reasonable to bar a member from activities that involve children, but to permit other activities to continue.

Full suspension

A club's committee may determine that it is in the best interests of the club for the member to be suspended from all use of club facilities or participating in club activities, at all times.

Confidentiality

The club must take reasonable steps to ensure that limited or full suspension is complied with. It is highly unlikely that this would involve notifying all members, but members who participate in club activities very regularly may have to be notified so that they would notice if a member did not comply with their suspension.

Similarly, the BCA Safeguarding Officer or Council may feel that it is necessary to notify membership secretaries of other clubs, in order to prevent a member over whom there are concerns from moving to other clubs. This would be decided on a case-by-case basis, by the BCA Safeguarding Officer and at least one other council member, and clubs who were notified would be asked to keep the matter confidential – only key club officers would need to know.

Liaison between clubs, BCA Council and insurers

In all situations where there are suspicions, investigations or a member is suspended, the decisions of the club's committee must be forwarded to the BCA's Safeguarding Officer. Very rarely, the BCA's safeguarding officer or BCA Council may feel that more stringent protective steps are required than the club has already taken. The club's committee may then either comply with those steps, or refuse to do so. BCA provides liability insurance for all members and in this event, BCA would have to notify the insurers who would determine whether the club's insurance would be suspended. It is very much hoped that such a scenario will never play out.

Outcomes once an investigation is complete

Again, there are several possible outcomes.

- It may be that it is decided that the concerns or suspicions had no merit
- It may be that there are legitimate concerns, but which do not imply criminal behaviour:
 - A club's committee may decide to offer advice to a member about their future behaviour.
 - Or the committee might decide permanently to limit a member's activities, for example by not allowing them to participate in activities where children or vulnerable adults are present. The committee might feel that the issue would be re-visited after a suitable period of time has elapsed.
 - Or, the committee may feel that the outcome of the investigation means that the member has to be permanently excluded from membership.
- It is essential that the club notify the BCA safeguarding officer of their decisions.
- As described above, BCA may feel that other clubs would need to be notified.

Recording information

Information that is passed on to the BCA, Social Services and the Police must be as helpful as possible. Hence there is a necessity for making as detailed record as possible. This should endeavour to contain:

- the nature of the incident;
- a description of any visible injuries;
- the child's account;
- times, dates or other relevant information;
- a clear distinction between what is fact, hearsay and opinion; and
- a record using the BCA's Safeguarding Incident form

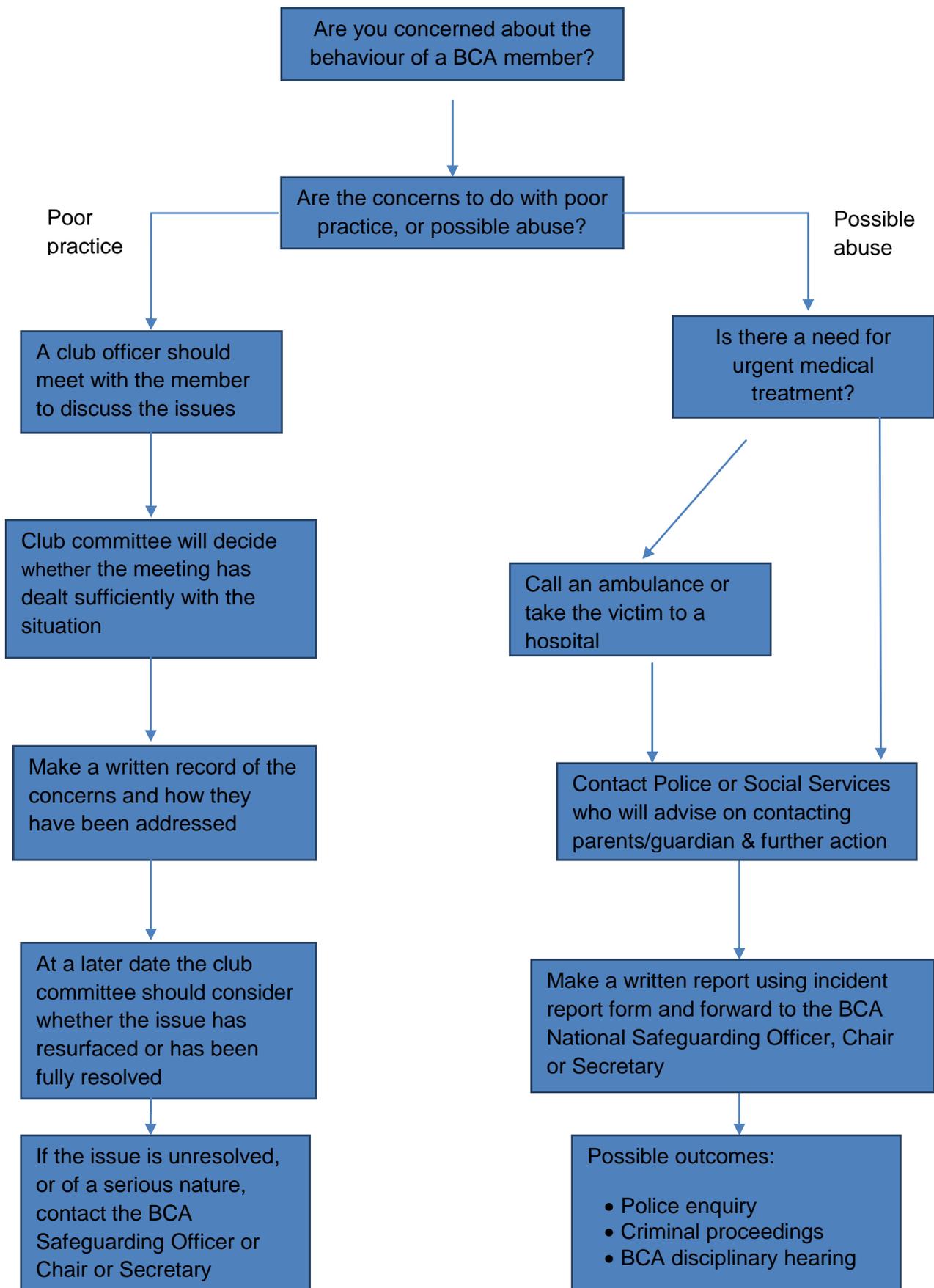
Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made a long time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children or vulnerable adults). Where such an allegation is made, you should proceed in the same manner as described above, ie make a written record and refer on to police or social services, with a copy to the BCA safeguarding officer.

Storage, Access to and Retention of Recorded Information

Information passed to the BCA in accordance with this policy must be kept securely, with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. These records are to be retained for 30 years.

Dealing with concerns, disclosure or allegations about BCA members



Concerns about abuse outside a BCA setting

If this happens you should ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult. If he or she requires immediate attention call an ambulance, inform a doctor of your concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a safeguarding issue.

If a formal referral is made make it clear that it is a safeguarding issue. Police forces have specialised Safeguarding Units which deal with allegations of abuse within the family and by people in positions of trust. In a real emergency, or if completely unsure as to what to do, telephone 999.

Parents/carers should only be contacted **after** advice from Social Services.

It can be especially difficult for children or vulnerable adults from an ethnic minority or who are disabled to disclose abuse to others. Adults should be especially vigilant with these groups and be aware that their own prejudices may block them from believing these groups. It is important to give thought as to how adults respond in these situations.

In all cases it is important that the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount and that every effort is made to maintain confidentiality.

Good practice Guidelines for adults caving with children and vulnerable adults

When planning activities for children and vulnerable adults:

- Consider the needs and capabilities of everyone in the group, and plan activities that are appropriate. For example, avoid trips that are overly physical or too wet, given the age and experience of your group. Aim for them to have fun and want to come back for more.
- Ensure that children and vulnerable adults are wearing clothing, footwear, helmet and lighting that are appropriate for the caving environment.
- Ensure any other equipment (for example, harnesses) is appropriate for the size of the participant and in good condition.
- Carry a first aid kit and spare light in your group. If doing vertical caving, carry a spare rope of the length of the tallest pitch, so that rescues can readily be affected
- Ensure children and vulnerable adults cave in an environment where risk is kept to a minimum. For example, experienced adult cavers will sometimes traverse a cave passage at a high level when progress lower down is difficult or impossible, confident that their caving skill will prevent a fall. Children and young adults are unable to make that judgment. Thus you should pick venues where such risks are minimised, or use traverse ropes or safety lines that you might not bother with when caving with adults.
- Do not allow children or vulnerable adults to cave when injured, if the injury could be made worse or could impact their ability to cope.
- Think about arrangements for changing. Children and vulnerable adults are less able to think ahead, so if a change of clothes or a towel might be needed, check that they have these things.
- Motivate children and vulnerable adults through positive feedback and constructive criticism.

During activities with children and vulnerable adults:

- Ensure that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness as well as with equality.
- If physical support is required, for example when tackling an awkward section in a cave, ensure the individual is aware of what is happening and has consented to this physical help. If possible, ensure that your help is visible to other members of your group. Avoid physical contact that could be misconstrued, for example helping with a climbing move by pushing on someone's bottom. In some situations, other children or vulnerable adults in your group may be better placed to provide help, under your supervision.
- Explain why you are doing something and try to facilitate, as far as is practical, an open and inclusive approach to the activity. People often respond better if they feel they are part of the process.
- Respect children's and vulnerable adults' need for privacy when changing. For example, they could change inside a vehicle, or maybe they could stand at the back of a vehicle whilst adult members stand at the front.

Avoid:

- Taking children and vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, or spending time alone with a child or vulnerable adult. This might become necessary in emergencies, or if a youngster has to leave a cave before

the rest of the group. In such an event, maintain a respectable distance (for example by sitting them in the back of the vehicle) and ensure that their parent or guardian is aware.

The following must never happen:

- Taking a child or vulnerable adult alone to your home.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- Doing things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult that they can do themselves.
- Allowing allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, not acted upon or not recorded.
- Allowing children to consume alcohol or take illegal recreational drugs.
- Allowing any physically rough or sexually provocative, contact or games.

Good practice for clubs

BCA is keen to encourage young people and vulnerable adults to go caving with clubs. Clubs may of course decide not to invite children and vulnerable adults to use club facilities or take part in club activities. If clubs do decide to let youngsters and vulnerable adults participate, BCA advises the following.

- Put safeguarding on the agenda for the club committee on an annual basis.
- Ensure that all children and vulnerable adults are either accompanied by their parent or carer. Alternatively, ensure that the parent has nominated an adult who will be responsible for their child ‘in loco parentis’. Best practice would be for parents to sign a very short form confirming this in writing (a sample copy is in the appendices). This adult would be someone that the parents already know, not a member of the club that they’ve just recently met.
- A few clubs may wish to do activities with young people, when neither their parent nor a friend of the family will be there. In that event, clubs will need to ‘vet’ members who will be responsible for the children. Vetting will consist of a DBS check (which BCA will arrange and pay for), plus a few supporting documents including references. See the full Safeguarding policy for details. Clubs unsure about these options are encouraged to contact the BCA’s safeguarding officer for help.
- Consider adopting a policy that when children and vulnerable adults will be using club facilities, other users who have booked in at the same time will be notified. This is to address the fact that some behaviour in club facilities can sometimes be appropriate when only adults are present.
- Ensure that all members have been given a copy of this ‘good practice’ advice, and provided with a link to the full BCA safeguarding policy.

Good practice: BCA

The BCA is responsible for its Safeguarding Policy and implementation. Individual clubs who are involved with children and vulnerable adults are required to work within this guidance. They are also encouraged to produce their own guidance and ensure that all members are aware of procedures and guidelines for good practice.

The BCA recommends that every club involved with children and vulnerable adults should have a designated Officer for youth and vulnerable adults. This person should ensure that the club is familiar with BCA and current guidance.

The BCA will publicise its Safeguarding Policy to show its commitment to providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults.

Clubs are advised to follow the BCA procedures contained within the Safeguarding Policy in the event of an incident.

Parents should be clear what the BCA or a club are doing and that the activities are being run in relation to accepted good practice. The BCA provides a consent form which ensures that parents are aware of the proposed arrangements. Clubs may amend the consent form to reflect their arrangements. A copy must be forwarded to the BCA’s national safeguarding officer before being sent to parents.

The BCA and clubs will develop and promote their anti-bullying policy.

Safeguarding guidelines for clubs

1. Introduction

The guidance given in this document is intended to help clubs and their officers to act both reasonably and prudently in the area of safeguarding and assist them in fulfilling their duty of care.

These guidelines are an appendix to the full BCA Safeguarding Policy. There is also a 'good practice' document which we are keen for every BCA member to have read.

BCA advice and policy in this area is likely to evolve over time. If you need clarification or have any suggestions please contact the BCA Safeguarding Officer.

2. Overview

A quick summary of whether DBS checks are needed:

If...

1. Your club does not allow under 18s to join as members and/or attend club meets.
2. Your club allows under 18s to join as members and/or attend club meets, but only with a parent/carer.
3. Your club allows under 18s to join as members and/or attend club meets, but only with a parent/carer or an adult *in loco parentis*, nominated by a parent.

...then

These three situations are similar and your club is not required to appoint a Youth Officer or carry out DBS checks.

However when children are caving a consent form, and appropriate monitoring by the club's committee, are still important.

If...

Your club allows under 18s to join as members and/or attend meets without a parent/carer or an adult *in loco parentis*.

...then

- The BCA must be informed.
- The club and/or the officers have additional responsibilities and duties that relate to those under 18
- An appointment of a Youth Officer should be made.
- Adults directly responsible for young people, either in club premises or on caving trips, will need to be vetted, including a DBS check.

Regardless of which of the following two scenarios apply, a consent form is appropriate for youngsters to go caving, as is a system for club officers to satisfy themselves that trip leaders have the necessary skills and good judgment, and also that proposed venues are appropriate. This is dealt with in the following pages.

3. In loco parentis

A parent may give consent to anyone they wish to, take their child or vulnerable relative caving. This is an arrangement between the parent and the person taking the child or vulnerable adult. The person taking the child or vulnerable adult will be in *in loco parentis* and this requires them to exercise a duty of care that would be provided by a reasonably prudent parent.

4. Consent forms and statements of participation

It is wise to use a consent form which sets out who is responsible for the child or vulnerable adult. There should also be a letter which explains the accommodation arrangements, nature of the caving envisaged and clothing required.

5. Ensuring that trips are appropriate for the participants and that adults in charge have the necessary skills

It's important that the club's committee has some governance over activities for children and vulnerable adults. To that end:

- Parents should complete a consent form, stating the needs of the child and giving a rough outline of their previous caving experience, if any. That form only needs to be completed once, not for every trip, provided that the trips are similar in nature. If a child moves to more advanced caving, parents should be made aware of the different nature of the proposed trips, and agree to this.
- An officer of the club needs to know which adult will be in charge of a trip, and should be satisfied that they are a fit person, in terms of experience, skills and temperament.
- Discussion must be held between a club officer and the adult leading the trip(s) regarding the venue(s) they propose to visit (including any backup plans). For example, a list of possible caves might be agreed, which appropriate to the children's age and experience.

6. Safeguarding policy if parents or other carers will not be present

For clubs which allow under 18s to attend meets without a parent/carer, nor a friend of the family in loco parentis:

- The club should have a designated Youth and Vulnerable Adult Officer who is responsible for safeguarding within the club. It is essential that this person should know how to respond if any allegation or concern is raised and that they should know what to do next. Full guidance is given in the BCA's safeguarding policy.
- At meets it is recommended that there is a designated person responsible for safeguarding issues. This person should be identified as such to all present – including children or vulnerable adults. They don't have to be the Youth and Vulnerable Adult Officer.
- Wherever possible, an adult should not be alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Children should not sleep in the same room as adults where separate facilities are available, unless of course they are staying with their parents.
- When both males and females are present there should also be male and female supervising adults and there should be separate male and female sleeping areas
- Those **supervising** the children or vulnerable adults and those **likely to be on their own** with children or vulnerable adults should be DBS checked.
- When children and vulnerable adults are using club premises, it may be wise for the club to notify members, especially if it is rare for young people to visit.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I'm a BCA individual member and I offer to take my friends' 16 year old son and 17 year old daughter caving. Am I affected by safeguarding issues?

A. You will have an enhanced duty of care to be responsible in the judgements you make above and below ground and you will be acting in *loco parentis* for the two youngsters. It's important that your friends understand the nature and risks of caving so that they can make an informed decision about whether or not to let their children accompany you and put you in the position of being in loco parentis. You also need to consider privacy issues when they are getting changed.

CLUBS - OCCASIONAL VISITS

Q. Occasionally, I would like to take my grandchild/niece/nephew or a friend's children or a vulnerable adult with me when I attend a club meet. Can I do this?

A. Yes, provided it is permissible within the club rules. Also, be clear to have the consent of the child's parent/carer and inform them of the activities and arrangements. You will be in *loco parentis* for that particular child or vulnerable adult. And be mindful of the maximum of four days of caving permitted by insurance for non members.

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS and INSURANCE COVER

Q. A prospective member of our club wants to bring their child or a vulnerable adult on a club meet. Is that permissible?

A. Yes, providing it is permissible within your club's rules. BCA's insurance covers prospective members for caving on up to four days in a year. For any more than that, they would have to become a club member to continue to have insurance.

Q. We're asked if we can take under-18s on our mid-week caving meets. Is this OK?

A. Yes, providing it is within club rules. If the under 18 is accompanied by a parent/carer who will eventually join the club after a period of being a prospective member, or if a friend of the family will be nominated by a parent to be *in loco parentis*, then DBS checks are not required. If the club decides to allow under-18s to attend without a parent/care or adult *in loco parentis*, vetting including DBS checks, for those directly responsible for the youngster(s), is required.

Q. Can children join the club as a member?

A. If the club decides to allow child members, this is perfectly acceptable. Indeed, for children to take part in more than four days of caving in a year, they must be members in order to be covered by BCA insurance.

Q. What age counts as being a child?

A. Anyone under the age of 18.

CAVING

Q. Is our club's sign-out board sufficient for groups containing youngsters and adults?

A. See the earlier section about ensuring trips are appropriate. A club needs to be satisfied that the trip leader has the skills and judgment required, and that the likely venues are appropriate for the age and experience of the participants.

DBS checks

Q. Are our club members required to have a DBS check if children go caving?

A. Actually, it should be called 'vetting', since there is a bit more involved than just the DBS check. There are two scenarios:

a) If the child is accompanied by a parent/carer, or the parent nominates a friend of the family to be 'in loco parentis', then vetting is not required.

b) Otherwise, the club is agreeing to supervise and care for the children. In that event, vetting is required.

Q. Does everyone in the club require a DBS check?

A. No. Vetting is only needed if neither a parent nor a friend of the family are present. And even then, it's only required for those directly responsible for the child, or anyone who might be on their own with the child (which should be avoided). Other members of the club can continue to use club facilities, stay overnight and go caving, without a DBS check.

Q. What does vetting entail?

A. A few things. Firstly, proof of identity is required, for example a passport and also a couple of household bills proving your address. You then fill in an application online. Club members are not paid, so they are volunteers. Thus the

DBS check is free, though the online agency we use do levy a small fee. BCA nationally will cover that fee. As well as applying for the DBS check, members should join the free 'DBS update service' which would allow the BCA safeguarding officer to verify their status at a later date, but only with the member's permission. In addition to the DBS check, two very short references are required to confirm that the member is a fit person to look after children in a caving context.

Q. How do we go about getting DBS checks done?

A. Contact the BCA National Safeguarding Officer who will send full details. Expect the process to take several weeks at least, so plan well in advance.

Q. Can we accept a copy of a DBS check that a member has from another organisation?

A. We can only re-use a DBS certificate if that person has already joined the 'DBS Update Service' and gives permission for the certificate to be verified online. Online verification may be done either by the BCA National Safeguarding Officer, or by a club officer. A copy of the original certificate, together with a printout of the result of the online verification, must be kept.

Q. We are aware of concerns about a member, outside of a caving context, that could imply issues if children are using club premises or going on meets. What should we do?

A. This becomes relevant if the concerns relate to children and vulnerable adults. In the event that children or vulnerable adults are going to use club premises or go on meets, the club's officers need to ensure that they don't come into contact with that member. This is a sensitive issue and there are a range of solutions. For example, the member could be asked not to use the club hut that weekend, or the youngsters could avoid the hut and go caving directly. Club officers need to recognise that safeguarding has to take the priority in decision making.

HUTS AND NIGHTS AWAY FROM HOME

Q. We have Family Rooms within our club hut where children or vulnerable adults are allowed to share a room with their parents. Is this permissible?

A. Absolutely. That said, the club and its officers do have a duty of care, for example to make parents/carers, together with children and vulnerable adults aware of known hazards and risks.

Q. I believe that when a parent – or an adult acting in loco parentis - accompanies a child, they can make decisions about the sleeping arrangements that might be available for that child or vulnerable adult. Is this correct?

A. Yes. If possible, both parent/specified adult and child or vulnerable adult should be happy with the arrangements prior to the trip taking place.

If you are acting in loco parentis it is wise in these circumstances that in addition to obtaining parental consent, you make clear to the children and parents before the trip precisely what the sleeping arrangements are likely to be in the hut (or on the campsite). If the parent, child or vulnerable adult or you as the in loco parentis adult are not happy or not satisfied with the arrangements it is best that alternative arrangements are found or that the child or vulnerable adult does not go on the trip.

Q. Children have so far very rarely used our hut. Some members get a bit rowdy in the evenings. What should we do?

A. It would be a good idea to let other hut users know that there will be children or vulnerable adults present. If the club's membership are keen to encourage participation by children and vulnerable adults, it might be wise to develop a short code of conduct for members.

SUPERVISED GROUPS AT CLUB HUTS WITH UNDER 18s AMONGST THE GROUP

Q. I believe that when a school or youth group is allowed access to a club hut, it is wise not to allow members of the club who have nothing to do with the group to use the hut?

A. BCA thinks that club members can still use the building, provided:

- The club must ensure that the children have rooms that have no adult members in them, for example by putting a notice on the door saying it's reserved for the school, and by advising members in advance.
- Club members about whom there are concerns that would relate to children (even if outside a caving context), must not use the hut at that time.
- Club members who do use the hut should have respect to the needs of the children, for example by being reasonably quiet at very late hours.
- The agreement with the school or youth group must state whether other club members are allowed to use the facilities. The school or youth group must advise parents of what the arrangements will be.

Appendix 3

Policy on the correct handling and safekeeping of DBS certificate information

Introduction

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the British Caving Association complies fully with the code of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificates and certificate information.

It also complies fully with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

Storage and access

Certificate information should be kept securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

To note: those registered care homes which are inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), those organisations which are inspected by Ofsted and those establishments which are inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) may be legally entitled to retain the certificate for the purposes of inspection.

In addition, organisations that require retention of certificates in order to demonstrate 'safer recruitment' practice for the purpose of safeguarding audits may be legally entitled to retain the certificate. This practice will need to be compliant with the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and incorporated within the individual organisation's policy on the correct handling and safekeeping of DBS certificate information.

Usage

Certificate information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep certificate information for any longer than is necessary. This retention will allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints, or be for the purpose of completing safeguarding audits.

Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, for example by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack).

We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a certificate. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the unique reference number of the certificates and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

Acting as an umbrella body

Before acting as an umbrella body (an umbrella body being a registered body which countersigns applications and receives certificate information on behalf of other employers or recruiting organisations), we will take all reasonable steps to satisfy ourselves that they will handle, use, store, retain and dispose of certificate information in full compliance with the code of practice and in full accordance with this policy.

We will also ensure that any body or individual, at whose request applications for DBS certificates are countersigned, has such a written policy and, if necessary, will provide a model policy for that body or individual to use or adapt for this purpose.

Appendix 4

Policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders to supervise young people

The British Caving Association (BCA) will from time to time need to recruit suitable adults to supervise young people, either whilst caving, or when using accommodation. Almost always this will be a voluntary, unpaid activity.

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the BCA complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

The BCA undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

The BCA can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that the BCA are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended).

The BCA can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

The BCA is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The BCA has a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process.

The BCA actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.

The BCA select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

The BCA ensures that all those in the BCA who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.

The BCA also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, the BCA ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

The BCA makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request.

The BCA undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Appendix 5

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Introduction

The British Caving Association (BCA) is committed to providing an environment free from bullying and harassment. We aim to ensure that all members are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. This policy covers bullying or harassment including online, on caving trips, at caving-related events or members' social functions. This policy applies to all members at all levels.

What is harassment? Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". Harassment also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past. It is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 to harass a person because of their age,

disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It also includes conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment). Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- unwanted physical conduct including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour;
- offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content or the display of offensive materials;
- unwanted jokes, banter, mocking, mimicking or belittling a person.

What is bullying? Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying can include the use of personal strength or the power to coerce through fear or intimidation, not necessarily from someone in a position of authority. Bullying may be physical, verbal or non-verbal. It can include conduct that is not face-to-face, including via text message, email and social media.

Examples of bullying include:

- physical or psychological threats;
- overbearing and intimidating behaviour;
- inappropriate or derogatory remarks about a person on social media;
- persistently picking on people in front of others or in private;
- regularly and deliberately ignoring or excluding members from activities or social events;
- regularly making the same person the butt of jokes.

Breaches of this Policy

Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in BCA and all members are required to treat each other with dignity and respect. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Serious cases of bullying or harassment may lead to termination of membership. Members who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith is unacceptable and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to action under our disciplinary procedure.

If you believe you are being harassed or bullied, you may wish to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. Explain the situation and how it has made you feel. It can be helpful to describe the event so the other person is clear about your concerns. Use the opportunity to ask the person to change or stop their behaviour. Alternatively you may speak to a senior member of your club, regional council or BCA who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If you do not feel that informal steps are appropriate, or they have been unsuccessful, you should raise the matter formally under our grievance procedure. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with our grievance procedure. If we consider that there is sufficient evidence to suggest you have been harassed or bullied we will consider the appropriate action to take. If the person accused is an employee, this may include invoking our disciplinary procedure. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person concerned.

Children and Vulnerable Adults

For some children or vulnerable adults bullying can be taken to the extreme and can make their lives intolerable. Bullying is something that needs to be taken very seriously. It is not acceptable for adults to dismiss bullying as a simple part of growing up. There is sufficient evidence to show that the consequences of bullying can be devastating both to the victim and their family.

There are three main types of bullying:

- Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking or theft
- Verbal, e.g. racist or homophobic remarks
- Emotional, e.g. persistent negative feedback.

All these will include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim.
- A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victims.

In a caving context emotional bullying is most likely to be found rather than physical violence. For example:

- Unwanted peer pressure from other cavers to attempt caves that are too hard or dangerous for the members of a party
- A parent who pushes too hard
- A caver who intimidates others

It is the responsibility of all adults, children and vulnerable adults to treat one another with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness. All involved should be prepared to:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children or vulnerable adults to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, but do not promise that you will not tell anyone else.
- Keep records of what is said (e.g. what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the appropriate person in charge and club officers, and ensure that the BCA Safeguarding Officer is informed.

Appendix 6

Serious Incident Policy

In the event of a serious incident, accident, rescue or similar where the media and outside authorities are involved, the BCA Secretary shall immediately advise the Training Committee, QMC, Council members and all others who may be involved that all requests from the media shall be directed through the Executive and that, where appropriate, a spokesperson shall be nominated to speak on behalf of all parties.

A written statement/s should be prepared, in association with outside authorities where appropriate, circulated as necessary and used when speaking to the media.

The Training Committee and the QMC and their members may be asked to become involved but shall always act through the executive.

Appendix 7

Further information and detail concerning the proposals in Agenda item 24

Item 25.1 The leaflet in PDF format has been submitted to accompany this proposal.

This leaflet was produced by Jane during her time as P&I convenor, but was left in limbo following her resignation in January.

This leaflet was presented to the January Council meeting and is included in support of this proposal. The final leaflet will include the correct BCA logo. Upon approving this leaflet, Jane should be reimbursed for all costs incurred (which I understand are within the previously agreed budget) and we will move forward to distribute this leaflet nationally.

The leaflet is an excellent and very professional piece of work, designed to inspire people to find out more about caving, and to direct them to the New to Caving website where there is more information. It can be distributed nationally to show-caves, outdoor centres, local amenities in caving areas etc to promote caving and the BCA as the national body.

Matt Ewles

Comment by BCA Acting Secretary: Members should be aware that the adoption of this leaflet was discussed and approved at a meeting of the Publications & Information Committee in April and their report was approved by BCA Council at their meeting on 13th April 2019. The leaflet will, therefore, be produced as soon as a decision about the logo has been taken. As is always the case out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of BCA will be reimbursed on submission of a claim.

Item 25.2 The current BCA logo has served well for many years, but it seems that now is the time to consider bringing it more into the 21st Century. Some cavers have commented that it looks a bit dated and amateurish. With so much current positivity for and interest in the BCA and the potential for lots of change ahead, now is the time to decide whether we want to change to a fresher and more modern logo to take us forward.

A proposed new logo portfolio is included in an accompanying PDF file. It is, of course, a silhouette of a caver on Dollytubs ledge looking out over Alum Pot and is adapted from a logo developed as part of a feature via UKCaving, where it was well supported.

With possible imminent website changes and the publication of the New to Caving leaflet, it is critical to have a decision at the AGM on whether to adopt the proposed new logo.

Matt Ewles

Item 25.3 The BCA website is our public facing portal to the world, and an enormous resource to members and non-members alike. The current website has served the BCA's needs well for some time and has lots of extremely good content but is dated in appearance and build.

Gary Douthwaite is a professional web designer, and is responsible for the current CNCC, NPC, York CC and Hidden Earth websites, as well as the former EuroSpeleo 2016 website, all of which he gives his time to develop voluntarily.

Gary has had recent discussions with the current webmaster about their visions for how the BCA website should evolve, and they have very different views about the extent and nature by which the website should change.

I am standing as BCA Secretary at this AGM, on an agenda for modernisation and change; not necessarily just a few tweaks but a sizable revamp of the way the BCA functions behind the scenes as well as how it presents itself and communicates with its members. As part of this, a revamp of the BCA website is essential, and Gary has offered to give his time for free to do this providing he is appointed BCA webmaster and given the necessary access as set out towards the end of this proposal.

This is more than just a cosmetic refurbishment of the public facing pages.

The BCA should take advantage of Gary's offer; to redevelop the BCA website, including internal and external communications systems, the public website, the behind-the-scenes systems, and BCA online. This will create a modern, bespoke and professional website and systems to support the BCA moving forward, while ensuring that all coding is performed using current web design practices (so that if Gary went under a bus, heaven forbid, any professional web developer could pick things up).

There is no intention to abandon the useful content on the current website. The current webmaster has done a good job of making the BCA website an excellent resource. Now, however, it must progress to the next level, which I believe Gary can deliver.

As there are different schools of thought for how the BCA website should move forwards, I feel this matter needs to be considered by the AGM, and the position of webmaster should be appointed by the AGM and not by the P&I Standing Committee.

The new website will remain fully content-editable by all necessary content contributors, much as the current Wiki site is now.

In accepting this proposal, it will also be agreed that a budget is assigned. While Gary will be giving his time for free, some of the services (e.g. upgraded mail services) comes at either a one off or annual cost. Current estimates are in the region of £200-300/year, but as the full scope of the work cannot be known until it is underway, I propose allowing up to a maximum of £500/year to cover unforeseen eventualities.

Assuming proposal 26.2 is accepted, the intention would be to have online voting for all BCA Individual members up-and-running via what is currently BCA Online in time for the 2020 AGM, and thus Gary needs to be able to 'get on with the job' without having to bring minor expenses and simple decisions to BCA Council. Acceptance of my proposal would be taken as an agreement to allow Gary to progress the job using his skills as a web designer, and to consult with the appropriate individuals as required.

Following consultation with Gary, he has informed me that he would require the following details and authorisations to be able to undertake this work. Acceptance of this proposal will be considered acceptance of Gary being authorised to have these:

- Full and exclusive access to the BCA webspace via FTP and any associated database.
- Full access to the BCA webspace control panel.
- Direct access to change the british-caving.org.uk DNS records as required including all sub-domains.
- Two users on the members (BCA online) MySQL database:
 - User 1 with full admin permissions including access from external IPs (can be specified IPs).
 - User 2 with SELECT, UPDATE, DELETE, INSERT permissions.
- A list of all council roles (and who currently fills them) that need access to change the website content including details of which of the current pages/areas they need to change.

Matt Ewles

Comment by BCA Acting Secretary: The Manual of Operations requires the appointment of Webmaster to be ratified by BCA Council, based on a recommendation of the Publications & Information Committee. In my judgment the wording of this proposal means that it cannot be considered by the AGM.

Appendix 8

Item 26.1 It's generally agreed, the BCA could improve the way it is perceived within the caving community. Equally, for the future health of the sport, caving needs to be promoted to a wider, non-caving audience to help attract the cavers of the future.

The Publications and Information role within the BCA should be an integral part of this - communicating via newsletters, social media, articles, adverts, leaflets, the BCA website, events and of course publications etc.

The P&I is currently a Standing Committee, which is open to representatives from all constituent bodies. A recent Webex meeting on 9th April 2019 (the first convened meeting of the P&I in years) was attended by four people as representatives of a BCA constituent body and two invited other attendees. While it was a reasonably productive meeting, it became clear that the P&I is a function of the BCA that might be better supported as a single Officer position rather than as a Standing Committee, enabling one person to lead this and co-opt assistants for specialist areas (e.g. as per the current webmaster and newsletter editor positions). This is not unlike a Standing Committee but gives more authority to the appointed Officer to 'get on with the job' which in

the rapidly moving world of social media and publicity, is essential. Some things just don't need to be discussed within the current structure of the Standing Committee.

Of course, it would be expected that the P&I Officer would report to Council at each meeting and engage as necessary on matters that he/she judge as needing wider input or ideas. This fits with the aspiration of many people to see the BCA streamlined to allow quicker responsiveness to events, and less reliant on input from non-existent representatives from the various constituent bodies (thus leaving any available representatives freer to focus on the other BCA Standing Committees which would benefit more from wider input). It also expands the Executive beyond the classical three roles.

The constitutional amendments set out in agenda item 26.1 are proposed to make this happen (and the Manual of Operations will need to be updated accordingly in due course).

Jane Allen

Appendix 9

Item 26.2 These amendments will see

(A) Removal of the two-house voting system (and the group vote) at General Meetings.

(B) Replacement of this with online voting for all individual (CIM and DIM) members.

In a system where all individual members can easily vote on important matters without having to attend a physical meeting, I believe there would be no need for group voting in addition to individual voting; this is simply duplication of representation.

Group voting currently gives the same weight to a vote from a club with 5 members as it does to a group/club with 200 members or even a Regional Council which might represent 1000+ cavers. Furthermore, it is unclear exactly how representative a group vote is of their members' wishes. Some clubs may choose to discuss BCA matters with their members (this is great!) and then vote in accordance with the majority, but many will not, thus raising the question of whether a group vote is really indicative of the feeling of the members of that group, or just the feeling of the smaller number of people in that group. This duplicates representation for those involved in running the groups.

It is more appropriate that rather than voting themselves, groups should lobby their members to vote individually if there is something that they feel strongly about. This might even encourage groups to talk with their members about the BCA more often.

Finally, removal of group voting makes online voting a much simpler system to establish and removes a level of complexity from the process; and I passionately believe that if BCA is to remain a volunteer-led organisation it needs to be simplified.

Please be assured that I hold no grudges against clubs/groups; I am a club caver; I always have been and probably always will be. I am involved in three separate clubs (and am a founder of one of them). Therefore, I am passionate about clubs and what they give to British caving; I just feel club voting for the BCA is not the future.

The means of online voting is outlined in the constitutional amendment; i.e. a 30-day poll opened as soon as possible after a General Meeting. This will ideally be done using our own in-house system, similar to (and potentially an evolution of) BCA online. It will be designed to be simple and intuitive, and using the individual's BCA number for login and requiring an email address for registration. It is expected that, subject to proposal 25.3 being accepted and Gary appointed webmaster, an online voting system can be established ready for use in the 2020 Annual General Meeting. There would be no postal equivalent.

These constitutional changes should be voted upon on-bloc (i.e. all together at once). Note that I have included commentary in the constitution changes to help explain the rationale.

Matt Ewles