



Youth & Development Report

March 2021 BCA Council Meeting

Having spent the last 6 months getting my feet under the table and getting use to filling my predecessor's large shoes, I feel like the Youth and Development team is starting to gain traction.

CHECC

Despite Covid, by working closely with CHECC we have arranged weekly yoga sessions over zoom, which have been uploaded to Youtube for the wider membership to use, as well as organising a training event in Sheffield for local universities. We have plans to organise more localised training events once allowed to ensure the highest training standards despite transport issues that universities will face. I plan to meet with the delegates from the university clubs so that we can adapt our support to what their issues are. Further detail about the steps taken to offer this support will be provided in my next report.

Website Development

A small team have started renovating our sections of the BCA website, including an area for uploading minutes of our meetings, ensuring an openness with the wider membership as to what we do.

We have started to prepare articles for the BCA website which will further show the work cavers are doing for Youth & Development, particularly around Scouting, but also work that Steph Dwyer of Yorkshire Dales Guides has done with a group called Black Girls Hike.

We hope that this will improve the BCA's image both externally and internally, and show that it's not just bickering, there is lots that is getting done. This should also encourage BCA members to get involved in youth and development not only within their own clubs, but with voluntary organisations such as the scouts or other youth groups.

National Youth Caving Team Project

In my short time as Y&D Officer, I have identified some key problems with our youth intake. Firstly, many young people will not have the opportunity to get involved in caving in the first place, due to proximity issues, cultural issues, financial issues or even having

awareness of caving. Secondly, many clubs are yet to embrace the advice from the BCA Safeguarding officer, that not only is it okay to have young people joining caving clubs (without an adult), but also the route to being able to do this isn't massively strenuous. If and when young people do join clubs, there is not always a sense of youth community, due to the relatively small number of young people at a single club.

I have a project, in the early stages of planning that looks to help out on all three of these issues. Obviously this will be good for caving as a whole, but it will also be good for the clubs involved, ensuring that there is young blood in the club. University clubs will benefit massively from having freshers who are competent and experienced joining.

This project will have many parts to it, but will involve working closely with the Publications and Information working group (to ensure the project is marketed properly), the IT working group (to ensure that once people are interested, the program is easy to get involved in) but also the regional councils (who I hope will be able to encourage and enable clubs to get involved).

Yorkshire Dales Guides Adventure Academy

Some members of council will have seen the video put out by the Yorkshire Dales guides referencing the adventure academy that was supported by the BCA in association with stories in stone. Steph Dwyer has confirmed that crediting the relevant parties, this video can be used to advertise caving how the BCA sees fit. Noting that some members of council have queried the expenditure regarding this project, I've had a discussion with Steph to confirm what the plans are post Covid.

The intention is that in September events will re-commence with the young people signed up to the academy. These events are not limited to directly caving, but all round outdoors activities, touching on mountain safety, ecology and conservation.

During lockdown Steph has run remote (Zoom) outreach sessions for groups around the Dales, and they intend to continue these in person once regulations permit.

Diversity & Inclusion

When I first joined BCA council as Youth and Development officer, I made it clear that diversity and inclusion is something that was on my radar, and I intend on following through with that. I recently had a call with James McHaffie, Youth and Equity officer at the BMC, and we discussed what has and hasn't worked for the BMC in this area. Two key points I took away from the call were the importance of obtaining information relating to diversity and also to ensure that these minority groups are represented across the media.

I believe it is key that we obtain information about our membership so that we are able to ensure that caving is available to all, but also that caving has a welcoming culture,

encouraging those who come to stay. Several council and AGM minutes make note of an equality and diversity policy, however the policy itself is not readily available. Having discussed with some members of council, this has been located, and is due to be uploaded to the website. One key sentence of note is 'The BCA aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to ... and to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination'. Without understanding our current demographics, how can we pro-actively tackle and eliminate any discrimination that may exist?