

For Election as Treasurer for 3 years (2024-2027)

Chris Bolton (07006) – co-opted March 2024

Proposed by Russell Myers (00708)
Allan Richardson (00022)

Election Statement

I am standing for Treasurer because the role is vacant and somebody needs to do it. It's important for caving in the UK that BCA works effectively to fund the regional councils, manage insurance and co-ordinate qualifications, technical aspects and other cross regional topics. The present Council have overcome the toxic reputation that BCA had in some quarters, but volunteers have been unwilling to come forward. BCA remains under resourced and this affects what it can do and cavers' perception of it.

The BCA needs to communicate with cavers and demonstrate that it is working in their interests. I have no ambition to change what BCA does, but the way it does it needs to be sharpened up. As Treasurer, I will maintain a view of the organisation's budget and risks so that Council can make informed decisions. Finance underpins all activities, so needs to be well understood.

A trend among all national sporting bodies, to which BCA is vulnerable, is the increasing need to employ staff to do things which used to be done by volunteers. There are two ways to address this. Firstly, BCA must maximise volunteer effort by making it clear that volunteers are welcomed and respected. Second, the only source of funds to pay staff is the BCA membership, and cavers need to be convinced that BCA is doing a good job for them.

Why do I think I can do a good job as Treasurer for the BCA? I'm a caver, a logical thinker with an eye for detail, and I have considerable experience as a committee member and volunteer Treasurer in more than one type of organisation.

My first caves were with Scouts in the 1970s, then a short revival in 2006 curtailed by other pressures and eventually a more committed return, now that I'm retired from work, in 2022. I'm a member of Derbyshire CC and Craven PC.

I have no financial qualifications but am numerate and understand both the benefits and pitfalls of spreadsheets. My background is in design engineering, which I define as the analysis of problems and development of solutions.

I was Treasurer for the North West Region of British Canoeing from 1988-1990, and Chair for 3 years after that, with a seat on the national Council. In 1999 I was Chair of the Earthquake Engineering Field Investigation Team. That brought me to the attention of my own professional body, The Institution of Structural Engineers, following which I had 8 years on their Council and 5 years on their Trustee Board, including two as Honorary Treasurer. This was a strategic role, providing advice on financial matters to the other Trustees and maintaining an oversight; the Institution had an annual turnover of £5-6million and employed professional accountants. As BCA Treasurer I will address both the strategic and (in co-operation with the bookkeeper) the 'hands-on' aspects.

I look forward to being part of a team to take BCA forward and ensure that it can deliver the needs of UK cavers.