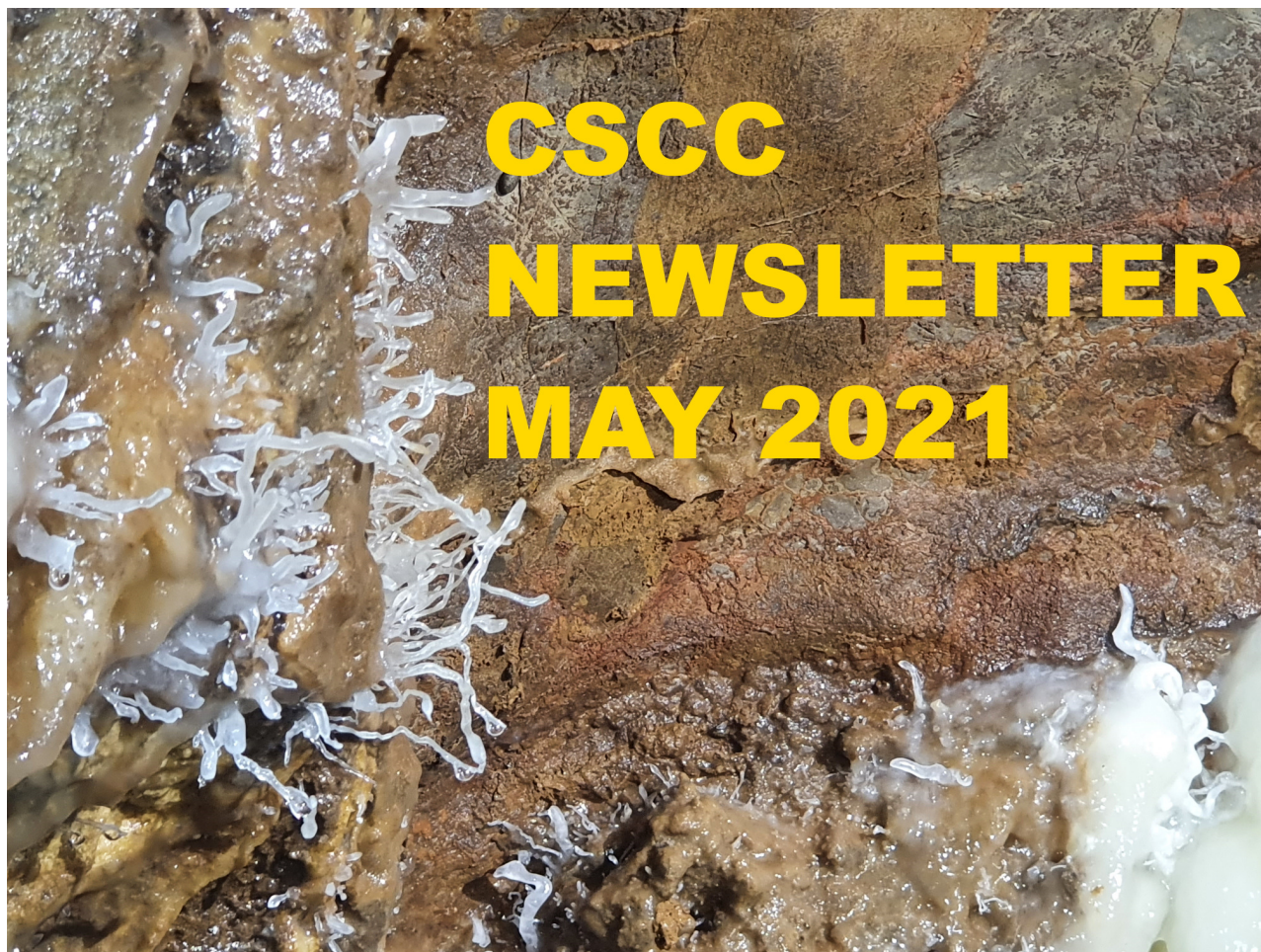


Subject: CSCC Newsletter - May 2021
From: Mailer <mailchimp@csc.org.uk>
Date: 08/05/2021, 16:08
To: David Cooke <dave@david-cooke.me.uk>

[View this email in your browser](#)



Helectites in Shatter Cave, Mendip.

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs! Our aim is to produce a digital newsletter at least three times a year to keep members up to date with the work of CSCC and its officers and provide news from around the region. With caving restarting, if your club has anything you would like to publicise, [please let us know](#), for example whether your club hut, if you have one, is open to visitors.

This is a new venture for CSCC so please help us shape future newsletters by letting us know the sort of content you would like to see and what would be useful to you.

[The CSCC website contains up to date information](#) from around the region and news is also posted to the [CSCC Facebook page](#). Please check out both of these resources.

Clickable links have been found not to work with all browsers. For that reason, there's a separate links section at the end of the newsletter. If the email links don't work for you, try using the 'View this email in your browser' option at the top of the newsletter and then clicking the links.

CSCC AGM - 7pm 14th May 2021

The AGM will be held by Zoom. A link will be circulated shortly on the traditional email list, so please

keep a watch for that. If you don't receive it, [please use this contact link and one will be sent to you.](#)

The Agenda for the AGM can be [viewed on the website.](#)

Notification has been given to members of the following nominations for officer posts:

Chairman: Ed Waters

Honorary Secretary: Frank Tully

Honorary Treasurer: Post open - to be elected from the floor.

Conservation and Access: Graham Price

Training Officer: Dave Keegan

Equipment Officer: Andrew Atkinson

Communications Officer: Peter Hall

BCA Rep: Linda Wilson

Webmaster: Dave Cooke

Scrutineer for the accounts (Not an officer post): To be elected from the floor.

[Role descriptions for the officers can be found on the website.](#)

OFFICERS' REPORTS

CHAIR

I have been privileged to serve as Chair of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs since the EGM held on 26th September last year. This has been an exceptional period to carry out this role, taking over from the previous chair after a period of controversy, major issues with national caving politics, significant access issues in our region and the small matter of the COVID 19 pandemic to deal with. I was elected to the role on a platform of improving transparency in the activities of the CSCC, better relations with the BCA and increasing participation in the CSCC. I hope I have delivered to some degree on all of these issues in the six months that I have held the post of chair.

We have seen a very good level of participation at the three general meetings that I have chaired, with 12 to 14 voting members present (as opposed to the historical average of 8) and a good number of non-voting observers attending as well. This is progress, with around 25% of CSCC members present at each meeting. To my mind the more participants we have at meetings the better that CSCC will represent the views of southern cavers, so I appeal for more of our member clubs to get involved, more clubs to join and any individual to feel free to attend meetings - you may not have a vote but you can express your opinions and see the many good things that the CSCC does in your name. The adoption of online meetings during the pandemic has been nothing short of a revelation, it has allowed many more people to attend and feedback has been totally positive. One unexpected benefit that has been reported by a number of attendees is that the online format can be far less intimidating than the physical meetings could be from time to time. I sincerely hope that my actions as chair have aided this impression as well as the use of online meetings. I have tried very hard to ensure that the meetings are held in a culture of respect, and I am very keen to receive any constructive feedback on my performance in this area as I believe that this is essential to improve the workings of CSCC.

This increase in attendance has finally allowed us to formally adopt the much needed new constitution, at the September EGM, which had been held up for many years due to the failure to rustle up a quorum at the previous meetings at which it was proposed. The officers are still coming to terms with all of the implications of the new constitution, for instance the circulation of the list of nominations for officers for this AGM was made a day or two late. However, I hope that our members will understand that the officers are doing their best to meet the spirit of the new constitution for this AGM, and the fact that we have an almost complete list of nominations for this meeting well in advance is to my mind a great advance and brings with it increased transparency. I am also very pleased that [role descriptions for each of the officers as now been placed on the website](#), I believe that this is the

first time that any such description of what each officer is expected to do has been placed in the public domain and is a small step towards making the CSCC a more "professional" organisation. As is the creation of the Communications Officer role, the first incumbent of which will be voted in at the AGM. The pandemic has only underlined that effective communication is a basic need for any organisation like CSCC, and I hope that all of our members and cavers at large will see a significant improvement in the way that we communicate as a result.

Over the last six months CSCC's relations with the BCA have been vastly improved from the previous confrontational situation on a number of issues. A great deal of progress has been made by both CSCC and BCA, but the journey is far from complete. The sometimes toxic atmosphere within BCA has started to change, though the continued frequent resignations in BCA show that there is still a long way to go. CSCC has been represented at every council meeting, and proactively involved in a number of initiatives including participation in the working group examining the evolution of the BCA's constitution. I would also like to re-emphasise my personal support, reflected by the wider CSCC through a vote at the February General Meeting, for the current BCA Executive who bravely stepped up to the mark after yet more resignations at the top level. I hope that this current executive can remain in place to provide stability for some time after the almost constant changes in recent times.

In many ways the role of chair is a relatively simple one and it is the other officers that do all of the hard work. As such I would like to express my sincere thanks to Frank, Cookie, Graham, Linda, Dave and Andrew, not only for carrying out their duties in such a difficult period, but also for the constructive manner in which they have all worked together. Not one of them is a passenger, all of them making a vital contribution to the running of the CSCC. I am very glad indeed that all of them are standing again this year, and urge you all to give them your full support at the AGM. I also look forward to welcoming our first Communications Officer (many thanks to Pete Hall for placing his head above the parapet) and anyone who is prepared to stand as Treasurer - noting that as no nominations have been received that we can accept nominations from the floor on the day.

I am looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible on May 14th for a constructive meeting

Ed Waters
CSCC Chair

SECRETARY

Compared to many of the other CSCC posts the remit of the secretary is pretty simple.

However, it does take time to go through the recordings of the meetings especially when they are contentious. Thankfully this year things have quietened down and CSCC appears to be moving forward. The time spent going through the recording and drafting the minutes has generally taken twice the duration of the meetings, and we have had four full meetings this year, including the previous AGM. This has resulted in an approximate total of 12 hours work.

Frank Tully
CSCC Secretary

TREASURER

[The draft accounts for 2020 are available from the website.](#) The CSCC has been more active on the C&A front and this is reflected in increased expenditure. Please note a significant portion is due to long outstanding expense claims being presented this year, some as far back as 2017.

The deficit of £3605.22 looks alarming but will almost entirely be reclaimed from BCA. All previous BCA Claims are paid up to date. The forthcoming BCA claim for year 2020 will be £3551.67.

The current list of outstanding agreed expenditure with expenses paid to date is shown below.

	Meeting	Budget	Spent	Balance
BCA Budget -5 gates in 2015 (Egg Cup, PG, Compton, UH,)	Nov-14	1500	1817	-317.00
Heal Farm access works. Lock & Signs	Feb-17	100	27	73.00
Nettle Pot. Gate.	May-17	600	612	-12.00
Maesbury Swallet. Gate	Sep-17	600	612	-12.00
Loxton Cavern. Stabalisation works.	Sep-17	700	244	456.00
Maesbury Swallet. Entrance surface works	May-18	200	4	196.00
Ubley Warren - Boulder Stabalisation - Increased from £150 (Nov-17) to £400.	Feb-19	400	149	251.00
20 CSCC Locks	May-19	300		300.00
Shipham Mines. Making entrances safe.	Sep-20	1800		1800.00
Swildons Barn. Repair flooring	Sep-20	1000		1000.00
Manor Farm Gate. Increased from £2000 (Jul-20) to £3000	Sep-20	3000		3000.00
Stoke Lane Slocker. Gate	Nov-20	1000		1000.00
CSCC Locks x 20	Nov-20	350		350.00
Star Shaft. Gate	Feb-21	1000		1000.00
Blakes Farm (YAH), Pondsmead (Stout, Slim) - Gates x 3	TBA	2000		2000.00

Our thanks go to Pete Glanvill for his donation during the year of £200 towards the powered sprayers for cleaning speleothems. This is from the surplus on the sales of his Reservoir Hole book.

At the end of 2020 the CSCC membership stood at 42 members of which 41 were also BCA members.

New Members: Devon Spelaeological Society, Swansea Speleo Society, University of Leeds Speleological Association.

Members: Avon Scouts Caving Team, Axbridge Caving Group, Bracknell & District Caving Club, Brighton Explorers Club, Bristol & District Caving Club, Bristol Exploration Club, Buckfastleigh Caving Club, Cerberus Spelaeological Society, Charterhouse Caving Company Ltd, Cheddar Caving Club, Combined Services Caving Club, Dudley Caving Club, Education in the Environment Caving Club, Exeter University Speleological Society, Frome Caving Group, Gloucester Speleological Society, Gosport Speleological Group, Greater London South Caving Club, Hades Caving Club, Hampshire Scouts Caving Club, Imperial College Caving Club, Kent University Caving Club, Mendip Caving Group, Mendip Nature Research Committee, Moles Caving Club, Newbury & District Caving Club, Oxford University Cave Club, Reading University Caving Club, Shepton Mallet Caving Club, Shropshire Scouts Caving Team, Slough Mountaineering Group, Southampton University Caving Club, Southsea Spelaeological Society, University of Bristol Spelaeological Society, Wealden Cave & Mine Society, Wessex Cave Club, West Sussex Cave Club, Wimps and Y-Anchors Caving Club, White Rabbit Caving Club.

Ex Members: Aberystwyth Caving Club, Kent Underground Research Group, Rivendell Caving Club, Shark Speleological Society.

I did step down as Treasurer but the job came back like a boomerang. I really do feel it is time for a fresher face.

David Cooke
CSCC Treasurer

CONSERVATION AND ACCESS

A report will be made at the AGM.

TRAINING OFFICER

The proposals for training workshops have been released, with the workshops based around a variety of different caving techniques and skills, from SRT to leadership in caves. The proposals use objectives to classify each workshop, meaning that those delivering the workshops have the freedom to alter the training depending on the

group, whilst also trying to create common goals across the region.

COVID has unfortunately prevented the delivery of actual training, however work has been ongoing to investigate how training can be delivered. I have attended a number of meetings with the training committee since the last council meeting, looking at how funding can be obtained to enable suitable individuals to be paid for delivering training (if required). Work is still ongoing in this area, however if anyone is keen to volunteer to deliver training then please let me know, help would be greatly appreciated!

*Dave Keegan
Training Officer*

EQUIPMENT OFFICER

Hard to imagine but due to lack of caving not much has been going on for equipment in CSCC. It has given time to review the current paperwork and system, which I have started to amend and will put forward proposals at a future date.

On the national scene the Equipment and Techniques Convener has resigned the role and also added that E&T should become the anchor scheme provider with the rest of the remit going to the training committees.

Although E&T has not been doing much but anchors, this is more a failure of the system and I feel that moving everything but anchors would leave a pointless committee, but also reduce the standards in UK caving. It is the system that needs to be fixed not the allocation of roles, separating the equipment and techniques from the train of their use is important for the checks and balance, equivalent to separating the makers and enforcers of the law in a democracy.

A few days before this report was due the following was received:

"Please find attached a new application for approach passage anchoring and Y Hang and my original application many years ago which fell on death ears and was not replied to.

Hopefully this newer committee has a more positive view, of how this request will not only make this part of the cave safer but more enjoyable and more travelled. I believe many caversy caver don't travel this route, as the risk of life is too great. I even heard of a 16 year old crossing approach passage, at the behest of his party, which I can only believe is WRONG. one slip or error and you fall about 40 feet or more to the stream way straight down. I do understand that there is access across but in my humble opinion it is too high a price to risk.

I would like someone to install P-anchors (x4 i'm guessing possibly 5 for increased safety (2 either side and 1 in the middle) for traverse line to cross in either direction on approach passage in Swildon's Hole Cave and for an additional Y Hang in the ceiling to descend to the stream way with SRT as an optional fun trip.

This is to make a superb round trip to Howards Dig entrance and possibly larger roundtrip if my dig at the Black Hole to high up Barnes Loop (no pretty section, which Les Williams and possibly Frank Tully originally started some years ago) is successful. More importantly though crossing approach passage, as it stands is an unnecessary risk and i will not do it. There is no hand grips or foot grip on the approach passage tube leaving the high up fossil stream passage.

I do not believe installing these anchors and y-hang would be a detriment to the cave but only enhance the safety and enjoyability of this seldom travelled section of the cave.

*I look forward to your response.
Jake Baynes "*

We are now trying to arrange a date to visit the site. The anchor request gives more detail and is [available on the website](#).

CSCC have to balance the many views of the caving community. I see that there is little doubt that it is a good round trip. The extreme points of view go from no gear should be added, as it ruins the sporting nature of caving, to everything should be made safe with gear everywhere. Some argue that if gear is placed it doesn't have to be used but the counter argument is that gear placement tames the situation and therefore alters it.

I would suggest three probable ways to be considered, for which I'll write a case for each after my visit.

- 1 Do nothing, leave as is.
- 2 Add anchors only. It would be fine for parties to rig and serif as they go.
- 3 Add anchors and a fixed line.

More information will be hopefully available for the meeting, where a decision can be taken.

Andrew Atkinson
Training Officer

BCA REPRESENTATIVE

Since standing as BCA Representative, I have attended every council meeting, each one lasting just over two hours, although one did turn into a three hour marathon with something of a 'last person standing' vibe as council members fainted from hunger or generally fell by the wayside from exhaustion. Thankfully, that hasn't been repeated!

As Ed has stated, the past year has been one of great change for BCA, with acting Chair Russell Myers doing an excellent job of building on the work started by Phil Rowsell in his short but effective tenure to ensure BCA council meetings are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect following a deeply turbulent and toxic period in the organisation's history, which saw numerous resignations at all levels in council and the various standing committees and working groups. There is still work to be done to improve the culture within BCA and like Ed, I am pleased that CSCC is supportive of the working being done by the current Executive with Russell Myers as acting Chair, Howard Jones as Treasurer and Alan Richardson as acting Secretary. I think they have formed an effective team well able to take BCA forward and ensure it becomes a national body that all cavers and regional councils can be proud to belong to. I urge all CSCC clubs and their members to continue support their work. In my view, what BCA now needs is a period of stability under the current Executive while it works through an overhaul of its constitution and manual of operations and then implements any resulting changes.

The job of BCA representative is a time consuming one and at a very rough estimate, I have spent in the region of 30 hours work on BCA matters, made up of: attendance at meetings, reading papers for meetings, reporting in full to CSCC and soliciting the views of members clubs when needed. There is a lot of email traffic on the BCA council list and if decisions are needed that involve all council members between meetings, this is done via email.

I worked with Russell Myers to set up a small group to look at the wellbeing challenges facing cavers during the pandemic, and to provide a [list of resources](#) for cavers wanting help in this area. I also joined the working group looking at changes to the constitution and manual of operations and am grateful for the help and support from Ed Waters in this area when I was unable to attend a meeting due to family commitments.

I have done my best to solicit the views of CSCC members and represent these to the best of my ability and I think it is important for members to have full information on the work of their national body. In general, I have some concerns that there are some people who very much see BCA as a regulatory body and would like it to have far-reaching powers to involve itself in the internal business of its members, whether such involvement is

asked for or not, and much of this revolves around what has come to be seen by some as a contentious clause in its constitution, clause 10.1, which (to paraphrase) prevents BCA becoming involved in a member's affairs unless requested to do so by that member. A consultation document has just been issued by the working group and I have included this in full as a separate document in this newsletter. I urge all CSCC members to consider this carefully and circulate this to their club members. This consultation is also important for any other access bodies who are members of BCA.

CSCC will also need to make its own response to the consultation, informed by the views of its members, so please consider these proposals and [let me have your views](#), which I will circulate to the officers to inform our collective response.

Also, if you have any comments or suggestions on how I can best carry out the job of representing CSCC on BCA Council, [please let me know](#).

Linda Wilson
BCA Rep

WEBMASTER

A general principle I aim to follow when developing the website is to enable updates to be done by others as well as the webmaster. Too many websites rely on just the webmaster for updates and then stagnate when the webmaster is overworked or loses enthusiasm. A second aim is to build on the cloud technologies that allow updates to be done from anywhere at any time and from any device with a web browser. For example, I can post updates from my smartphone standing at the entrance to Swildon's. Having said that, I've not worked out how to do that from Sump One yet!

So the main website is built on wiki software that allows the officers to update and add pages, in particular within their own sections.

[The CSCC Access Guide](#) has been completely re-written. The secure admin interface allows the C&A Officer to keep the guide up to date using just a web browser. The user interface has been improved to make it easier to find and read the cave access information. A useful feature is that the most recent updates can be found by sorting the "Last Modified" column by clicking on the heading.

The CSCC diary was syndicated from the BCA website, but that broke when the BCA redeveloped their website. The diary page has been re-written and now uses Google Calendar. That has several advantages. One is that you can incorporate the CSCC Diary into your own Google Calendar, if that's what you use. Another advantage is that by sharing the calendar any officer can update it, again just with a web browser.

The CSCC hasn't always been the best at communicating with its membership and the wider caving community. The proposed role of Communications Officer will address that and has my full support. The CSCC has several channels of communication including the website, two mailing lists and a Facebook page. Snail mail has been consigned to history and is likely to stay there. Keeping all these channels up to date is fairly time consuming. A dedicated Comms. Officer will be able to help with and improve the level of communication.

Any suggestions for improving the website are always welcome.

I'm happy to stand again for the role of Webmaster.

David Cooke
CSCC Webmaster

AGM PROPOSAL - Representing non-Club cavers in

the CSCC

The following proposal is being made to the AGM by Ed Waters in a personal capacity.

For some time I have noticed that there appears to be a growing number of cavers who wish to cave outside of the traditional club model. As things stand the CSCC, as BCA Regional Council, represents only those cavers who are members of those clubs that choose to join, but I feel that we should do our very best to represent all cavers in the region.. Of course there are clubs that cave in the south who chose not to join CSCC, but these do at least have the possibility of joining if they so wish. However for those who choose not to join a club, there is currently no method of formal representation in the CSCC.

I would therefore like to make the following proposal at the AGM;

That the CSCC Officers appoint a sub-committee to investigate potential ways in which southern cavers who choose not to be members of clubs can be represented. This committee will report progress to each of the General Meetings in 2021/22 with a view to drafting a proposal on individual representation at the 2022 AGM.

This proposal is made in my own name and not as CSCC Chair.

I would like to note that I have no preconceptions as to how this end might be achieved - indeed it may be that the conclusion of the sub-committee is that the present system meets the needs of individual cavers as much as proposing individual membership or some form of dedicated representative for individual cavers. I recognise that historically that it has been club cavers who have provided the vast majority of the hard behind the scenes work or CSCC, but perhaps this is because it has not been easy for individual cavers to interact with an organisation so focussed on the club model.

This proposal aligns with my personal goal of improving the way in which CSCC represents southern cavers as a whole and encourage members to consider whether or not they wish to support it at the AGM. I am sure this will generate some stimulating debate!

*All the best,
Ed Waters*

BCA CONSULTATION ON SECTION 10.1 OF ITS CONSTITUTION

The CSCC BCA rep received an email on 6th May 2021 with an attached consultation document on possible changes to section 10.1 of its constitution. The email stated:

"The consultation will be open for at least two weeks (at least until 21st May) but may remain open for longer. [The consultation itself can be completed using this Google form: https://forms.gle/PF6mkMTkiY1oPXGW6](https://forms.gle/PF6mkMTkiY1oPXGW6)

The consultation is open to all BCA members, including individual members, clubs, access-controlling bodies, National Bodies, and regional councils. Please feel free to forward this consultation; for example, if you are a club secretary you may wish to forward it to your members. The Google form includes a link to the explanatory document attached to this email, so the forwarding the link to the Google form is sufficient."

CSCC members clubs are urged to consider this document carefully and forward it, as suggested, to their members.

BCA Constitution Section 10.1 A Consultation from the BCA Constitution and Operations Group

Purpose

At the 2020 AGM of the British Caving Association, Proposal 8 was submitted a ballot where it was passed. The proposal requires the BCA Council to consider 'a new form of words for section 10.1 of the BCA Constitution'.

This document has been sent to cavers and caving bodies, including the Regional Councils and National Bodies of the BCA, to consult on possible changes to this section, and any other associated changes, to be proposed at the 2021 AGM.

Developing this new form of words, or multiple forms of words, has been delegated to the Constitution and Operations (Working) Group, formed by BCA Council following the 2020 AGM. As a working group, it has a Convenor appointed by Council, who may invite anyone they see fit to join the group. The group would welcome any interested members who wish to contribute.

Context

The proposal brought to the 2020 AGM had this wording. As it was a simple motion, and did not involve an immediate constitutional change (instead instructing BCA Council to propose a change in the future), it required only a simple majority (50% in favour). The proposal passed with 436 votes for, 45 votes against and 86 abstentions (90.6% in favour, excluding abstentions). This clearly shows an appetite for change to this clause of the constitution.

Proposal 8: Consideration of a new form of words for section 10.1 of the BCA constitution to be presented at BCA 2021 AGM (Proposed: Tim Allen, Seconded: Jane Allen)

Section 10 of the BCA constitution deals with 'limitations' and is outdated for a modernising national organisation. Section 10.1 states, "The Association shall not interfere in the affairs of a Member unless specifically requested to do so by that Member. The Association shall not mediate between Members unless requested by them in writing to do so." This wording requires reform.

Section 10.1 limits the effectiveness of the BCA as a national body in properly representing cavers. It can be used (and has been) to prevent the BCA investigating complaints, undertaking research into national policy issues and intervening in matters which are detrimental to the image of caving nationally. Even if BCA is funding a group or a scheme it cannot intervene unless invited to do so. This cannot be right. However, there is a value in member organisations having a degree of autonomy. Therefore a form of words are needed to maintain some member autonomy whilst allowing the BCA to properly act as a national body. This motion instructs council to consider a new form of words for section 10.1 of the BCA constitution taking into account the above and to agree those words at council by majority vote in time to present them as a constitutional change to the 2021 BCA AGM.

The proposal should be viewed in the context of the entirety of Section 10 of the Constitution, reproduced below.

10. LIMITATIONS

1. The Association shall not interfere in the affairs of a Member unless specifically requested to do so by that Member. The Association shall not mediate between Members unless requested by them in writing to do so.

2. Notwithstanding Sub Section 10.1, any member deemed to be acting against the interests of the Association may be suspended and subsequently expelled from the Association. Any suspended or expelled member shall have a right of appeal against an order of expulsion or suspension. Such an appeal shall be heard at the next General Meeting of the Association. The member must be sent a written notification of suspension and/or of expulsion to the last known address. Any member so suspended shall not be entitled to use any of the Association's facilities, including any certificates or awards or receive any grants or other funds, save for the repayment of expenses properly incurred in executing the Association's business.

3. Notwithstanding Sub Section 10.1, any individual deemed to be acting against the interests of the Association may be suspended from holding any certificates or awards and subsequently have those certificates or awards withdrawn. Such individuals shall have a right of appeal against an order of suspension or withdrawal. Such an appeal shall be heard at the next General Meeting of the Association. The individual must be sent written

notification of suspension and/or of withdrawal to the last known address.

4. The Association shall have no call upon a Member's assets or property other than for debts due, or incurred during membership. Nor shall the Association be responsible for the liabilities of a Member other than for those expenses incurred with the Association's approval.

Structure of the BCA

The BCA is defined in section 1 of the Constitution as 'a national federation comprising: individuals; caving, mining and other related Clubs; Regional Caving Councils; and National Bodies with specialist interests, all of whom have autonomy in their own field; together with any other bodies who express an interest in caving, mining or other subterranean phenomena.'

Regional councils

The current Regional Councils of the BCA are the Cambrian Caving Council (CCC), the Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC), the Council of Southern Caving Clubs (CSCC), the Derbyshire Caving Association (DCA) and the Devon and Cornwall Underground Council (DCUC).

Certain areas of work, such as equipment and techniques, training, and conservation and access are largely carried out by the regional councils. These are largely or entirely funded by the BCA, and do not generally charge their members. The BCA covers their running costs and funds any other spending that is for the benefit of all BCA members subject to a number of restrictions (volunteer labour is not paid, competitive quotes are required for commercial work, profit-making activities are not funding etc.).

The presumption is that regional councils will be reimbursed for all reasonable spending within the rules. One exception is that Conservation and Access funding must, at minimum, provide access for BCA Members and projects are subject to approval by the Conservation and Access committee for spending over £750 a year.

National bodies

The current National Bodies of the BCA are the Association of Caving Instructors (ACI), the British Cave Research Association (BCRA), the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC), the Cave Diving Group (CDG), the Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (CHECC), the National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO), the National Caving Scout Active Support Unit (NCSASU) and the William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust (WPCST).

Other areas of work, such as cave science, mining history, or rescue, are carried out by National Bodies (such as the BCRA, NAMHO and the BCRC, respectively). The national bodies do not, in general, receive any automatic financial support from the BCA but instead raise funds from their own memberships.

Access controlling bodies

A small number of access-controlling bodies are members of BCA. These are bodies which are not Regional Councils but control access to one or more cave or mine sites.

Clubs

The majority of caving and mining clubs in Britain are members of the BCA. Some of these clubs also control access to a cave or mine site.

Individual members

Many cavers and mine explorers are also 'individual members' of the BCA (whether they gain their membership via a BCA club or from the BCA directly).

Summary

All of these bodies and individual members are Members of the BCA, and thus all are affected by Section 10.1. Each of these many bodies has different, but sometimes overlapping, areas of interest. Although these bodies are BCA members, they are separate bodies and are not controlled by the BCA nor directly accountable to it. All regional councils and national bodies of the BCA gain a vote on BCA Council and a vote in all standing committees of the BCA. Individual and Group members have four voting representatives each on BCA Council.

Section 10.1 touches on the delicate interplay of these connected but separate organizations and is therefore inevitably political in nature. It must be viewed in light of the potentially competing desires of the BCA's various member groups, and the BCA's overall membership to whom it is accountable. However, Section 10.1's exact aim, and its limitations, are unclear.

Potential strengths and weaknesses of Section 10.1

The following section identifies potential strengths and weaknesses of the current Section 10.1. It is important to note that different cavers will view these strengths and weaknesses very differently. For example, some cavers will see protecting the autonomy of regional councils as a great strength, while others see it as a weakening of accountability to the wider BCA membership. Inclusions in this section should not be seen as approval or disapproval of any of these positions, but simply points of view to be considered. Some of the possibilities listed below require a particular interpretation of the constitution, which an AGM could accept or reject as a valid constitution, as well as requiring seemingly unlikely decisions from the BCA or regional councils. **To be emphasised: the authors of this document do not agree with all of the points below.**

Identified potential strengths of section 10.1

- Section 10.1 can be viewed as a very strong statement of autonomy, which preserves the autonomy of members (including regional councils, national bodies, access-controlling bodies, clubs and individual members) to carry out work within their own interests without the fear of BCA interference.
- Without section 10.1, BCA could freely campaign against its member bodies, which could be ultimately counter-productive to the association of caving bodies that the BCA represents.

Identified potential weaknesses with section 10.1

- Section 10.1 can be interpreted as protecting a small group of cavers or a caving group from BCA campaigning, action or mediation even if the wider BCA membership would like the BCA to take action.
- Section 10.1 restricts the BCA from acting on caving matters regarding its own members more than that of non-members. For example, if a landowner was restricting access to a cave, the BCA could attempt to negotiate to improve the access situation (for the sake of this example, following the invitation of the relevant Regional Council). If however, the landowner joined the BCA as an individual member, then arguably the BCA would be barred from negotiating.
- The BCA is democratic body, with officers elected by its membership. However, many of the BCA's functions are devolved to its member bodies, including most of its most important functions such as Conservation and Access. The BCA's members supply funds for this work, but there is limited or no accountability from its members to the BCA's elected representatives, providing a democratic deficit, of which Section 10.1 provides a part.
- Section 10.1 does not clearly define 'interference'. This could, and has, been interpreted in many ways – it could cover merely investigating a situation. It can have a 'chilling effect' by preventing the BCA from holding any official position on any matter that affects, in any capacity, the affairs of a member.
- Section 10.1 treats all members, from individual members to Regional Councils, equally. It is easy to argue that individual members should be free of interference from BCA, while arguing for greater accountability for regional councils (which are largely funded by BCA member funds) and other group members.
- The interests of BCA members are overlapping, and while BCA members are not bound by Section 10.1 and may interfere in each other's members, the extent of one member's interests may cause issues in the BCA. For example, accepting the membership of an Access-Controlling Body in a region could be argued to be interfering

with the affairs of the relevant Regional Council which had interests in access in that region.

- Section 10.1 can be viewed as preventing the BCA from taking any action against any BCA member short of the 'nuclear' option of suspending and expelling a member described in section 10.2. Expelling or suspending an individual member or a club is an extreme action, unlikely to ever be taken except when no other option is available. Expelling or suspending a regional council seems extremely unlikely.
- Section 10.1 is inherently political in nature, but the following clauses 10.2 and 10.3 are inherently disciplinary in nature. BCA members should be free to express political positions without fear of a disciplinary process, and it is unhelpful to link clauses 10.1 with clauses 10.2 and 10.3

LINKS

If the clickable links in the body of the email don't work for you, the most likely reason is a browser incompatibility, for that reason, all links are given below in full, in the order in which they appear in text.

Contact for newsletter content/events etc (when a Comms Officer is in place, this will change to a dedicated email address for them.): webmaster@csccl.org.uk

CSCC website: <https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/start#>

CSCC Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CouncilOfSouthernCavingClubs/>

Contact to request Zoom link for AGM: secretary@csccl.org.uk

AGM Agenda: https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/_media/documents/csccl_2021.05.14_agm_agenda.pdf

Officers' Role Descriptions: <https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/about/officers>

CSCC Draft Accounts: https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/_media/documents/csccl_accounts_2020.pdf

Anchor Placement request: https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/equipment/approach_passage

BCA Mental Wellbeing Resources: <https://british-caving.org.uk/about-bca/working-groups/publications-information/mental-wellbeing/>

Contact email for BCA matters: bcarep@csccl.org.uk

CSCC Access Guide: <https://access-guide.csccl.org.uk/>

BCA Consultation on s10.1 of the Constitution response form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc6BwMx4KfA94zJ5Odqm7zKiLP_fCy1rCsJhbw3wG4zPOqPQ/viewform



Copyright © 2021 Council of Southern Caving Clubs, All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

Our mailing address is:

Council of Southern Caving Clubs
Hunters Lodge Inn

Priddy
Wells, Somerset BA5 3AR
United Kingdom

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Grow your business with  **mailchimp**