



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

[www.csccl.org.uk](http://www.csccl.org.uk)

## Minutes of General Meeting - Saturday 14 Sept 2019

Approved 23 Nov 2019

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### 1 Attendance

#### Voting Attendees

Alan Butcher	SMCC	AB	Chairman
Les Williams	WCC	LW	C&A Officer
Barry Wilkinson	White Rabbit	BW	
Dave Cooke	Cheddar	DC	Webmaster
Linda Wilson	UBSS	LIW	
Alan Dempster	Avon Scouts	AD	
Louise Hull	BEC	LH	

#### Non Voting

Frank Tully	WCC	FT	Secretary
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### 2 Apologies for Absence

Aubrey Newport	White Rabbit	AN	
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### 3 Approval of minutes from GM 24th Nov 2018

Minutes approved. With corrections

### 4 Chairman's report

Alan Butcher

#### 4.1 BCA AGM 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Alan Butcher attended the meeting representing CSCC

Frank Tully Attended the meeting representing the Wessex Cave Club

The meeting was well attended but notable in that it was not conducted on a civil basis. It felt like a number of people were being personally singled out for abuse by the majority of the meeting.

AB to make a formal complaint to BCA on CSCC's behalf regarding the following points:

- In the past to represent a club at the BCA AGM, a letter naming the representative, on headed note paper, signed by the club secretary, was required. In this meeting many of the clubs represented, presented signatures on bits of torn up tea box and napkins. This shows very poor respect for the meeting and those have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to bring the meeting together and make BCA function for cavers.
- Creating the 5<sup>th</sup> individual member post was unconstitutional. We understand that William Burn was not on the ballot because of an error. However ignoring the constitution is unacceptable.
- The AGM voted to accept nominations for uncontested positions which were up for election. This may not be constitutionally incorrect but it is against custom and practice. CSCC are worried that this was used to disingenuously remove people from posts at the last minute, rather than the correct process of putting in a nomination for that post before the deadline and it then going to a formal vote. A number of those posts are now empty. CSCC would therefore like the manual of operations to be updated so this this cannot happen again.



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### BCA Constitutional change

Matt Ewles presented 26.2 a proposal to amend the constitution;

- (A) Removal of the two house voting system (and group vote) at General Meetings
- (B) Replacement of this with online voting for all individual (CIM and DIM) members

See section 26.2 [https://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=general\\_meetings:2019\\_agm](https://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=general_meetings:2019_agm)

This proposal was passed by the attendees vote, and passed with a very narrow margin by the group vote. This proposal will now result in a postal/email ballot in November.

The proposal presented in CSCC's opinion will have far reaching effects fundamentally changing how the BCA is governed in the future.

This proposal changes the fundamental definition of what BCA is.

Clause 2.1 of the BCA constitution

*The association is 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. All shall be referred to as Members, as applicable.*

These changes do not alter clause 2.1

CSCC believe a fundamental change to the way the BCA is organised should be presented as such and not ushered in without summary, at the end of the preceding's, as it appears to have been.

At the meeting the rational presented, described the changes as removing the current two house voting system and enabling electronic voting, ostensibly to make BCA more democratic. In the attendees opinion very few people at the meeting appear to have had read the changes in detail.

### A concise overview of the changes:

- Abolish the house of clubs in BCA AGM votes and ballots and club's vote along with it.
- Remove postal ballots so that all ballots will be conducted as online ballots.
- Putting all proposals to the AGM that gain more than 25% of the vote out to an online ballot of all members. Currently only constitutional changes that pass, getting 70% of the vote, do or those that the AGM chooses to send for ballot.
- Membership applications no longer taken at any General Meeting.
- Contested election of Officers will go to an online ballot of all members.
- Makes it ambiguous if the Chairman of a General Meeting has a casting vote. Currently they don't.
- Removes the paragraph detailing how a ballot of the membership shall be conducted. This removes the option of a postal ballot in the process.
- Upon dissolution, the plan for dissolution must gain 75% of the votes in an online ballot of the membership.

The general opinion at the BCA AGM meeting was that the reason for these changes is to counter the voting disparity between different sized groups, the Wessex for example has approximately 300 members and there are many voting groups with 10 members or less, both have one group vote.

However the changes are bigger than this issue and I believe, in retrospect miss the point of making BCA more democratic.

CSCC's opinion that the majority of cavers in the UK are not particularly interested in the politics of caving, for most BCA is simply a way of getting caving insurance, they therefore elect their



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committees to represent them. This change takes away their representation moving power away from the clubs to the few who turn up to the meetings and want to write policy.

In addition there is a change in the voting emphasis: Voting will be all electronic and the requirement to trigger a vote passing to the membership has been lowered such that if a vote loses at the BCA AGM it will likely still go out to the membership. We are worried that this will quickly result in voter apathy, and the membership will simply speed read the executive summary and vote accordingly, as has happened with this AGM proposition, virtually no one read or analysed the four pages of small print, see the web link above.

The current system has worked for a long time, and we do not need to change it.

A letter to CSCC's members explaining our position on this issue to be drafted by AB and DC. Letter will be published on website with the draft minutes.

### 4.2 Longleat Estates Update

No further news. Caves continue to be accessible using the waiver system.

Post meeting Note, Waiver document is now downloadable from the CSCC website.

### 4.3 Youth and Development Report - Charterhouse Caving Company Ltd and access for young people

LIW raised the issue that the youth and development report was inaccurate.

The inaccuracies had been raised as a with Will Burn before the meeting but the report was not amended. The issue was also formally raised with the BCA executive and the Secretary was dealing with it. This was not mentioned at the BCA AGM.

For example; the report said "12 permits handed out a year". There had in fact been over 800 visits to caves under the control of charterhouse caving company. The 12 permits referred to led visits to the newer sections of Charterhouse cave. This significantly distorted the report.

CSCC can raise the issue to its members but this is a dispute between CCC Ltd and BCA.

We suggests LIW makes a formal complaint to BCA council and next year's AGM; The Youth and Development Report will remain draft until accepted by next year's AGM.

CSCC's opinion regarding the issue of BCA interfering in the operation of member clubs.

The BCA constitution is clear and unambiguous, BCA does not interfere in the operations of its member clubs and organisations.

## 5 Secretary's report

**Frank Tully**

Nothing to report

## 6 Conservation & access officer's report

**Les Williams**

6.1 Stoke Lane Slocker Land registry search forwarded to AB by LW.  
The parking space is not registered to anyone so it defaults to the Highways Agency.  
It is therefore acceptable to park there as long as the road is not being impeded.  
Done

6.2 Masbury Swallet Ongoing

6.3 Loxton Cavern Ongoing

6.4 Ubley Warren Ongoing

6.5 Hunters Lodge Inn Sink The Wessex fitted bars to stand on, below the lid.



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- CSCC agree to reimburse LW of his costs as long as they do not exceed £50, Done
- 6.6 Cow hole Ongoing
  - 6.7 Elm Cave Ongoing
  - 6.8 CSCC Locks Ongoing
  - 6.9 Viaduct Sink Atlas have fitted the gate to Viaduct Sink. Done
  - 6.10 Pigtail risers Les has some stock, Done
  - 6.11 Draft consultation document regarding Mellis Valley SAC & Fussell's Iron Works site, Done
  - 6.12 Access Database GP to have ability to add caves to database.  
DC to write some code to allow GP to add caves.
  - 6.13 GB keys have changed, new keys have been sent out to the member clubs.

### **6.14 BCA C&A Committee meeting**

A report regarding issues at the recent BCA C&A Committee meeting, was presented by LIW. The official minutes of meeting have not been published.

#### **Funding of Regional Councils.**

Currently funding requests by the regional councils are approved by the BCA finance committee as long as it meets the requirements in the regional funding document criteria.

However there appears to be a move to make regional funding dependent on approval by BCA C&A Committee.

The BCA C&A meeting agreed this change but it has not been agreed by the BCA finance committee.

CSCC believe that this would result in the majority of CSCC expenditure being approved through the BCA C&A committee, effectively taking away CSCC's autonomy.

CSCC believe that an agreement was made, when BCA was set-up, whereby regional councils were autonomous and could manage their own finances. However practically money would be collected and distributed centrally.

CSCC are therefore very much against the BCA C&A committee, overseeing our decisions.

#### **C&A Officer Resignation**

In addition the C&A officer has resigned, no reason has been provided.

#### **Threat to remove insurance from member groups who do not behave as BCA C&A committee instructs.**

CSCC are in agreement that this statement is unacceptable, where does this stop, would member groups of CSCC also be sanctioned.

### **7 Honorary treasurer's report**

Tim Ball was pressed to become treasurer at the last meeting, however he has informed AB that he has stood down because he does not have the time to perform the task.

DC to be acting treasurer until a replacement is found.

DC will also be representing CSCC at the finance committee in the interim.

### **8 Acting Training officer's report**

**Alan Butcher**

Training appears to have settled down and is moving in the right direction.

### **9 Equipment officer's report**

**Andrew Atkinson**

No report presented.

Requests for bolts should be directed using the form explain the process on the web site.



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### 10 BCA rep report

In light of the BCA safeguarding policy which was passed at the last BCA AGM, a question was asked by the Shepton CC regarding access to the hut by under 18's.

[http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=about:safeguarding\\_guidelines\\_for\\_clubs\\_9th\\_june\\_2019.pdf](http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=about:safeguarding_guidelines_for_clubs_9th_june_2019.pdf)

LW Paraphrasing the safeguarding document; a person under the age of 18 can attend a club hut or meet, but only with a parent/carer or an adult in loco parentis, nominated by a parent. See the safeguarding document for details.

#### 10.1 2020 BCA AGM

CSCC consider that in 2020 it is its turn to host the BCA AGM.

CSCC should therefore volunteer to hold a weekend of caving and the BCA AGM in Mendip on behalf of BCA.

### 11 Webmasters report

**Dave Cooke**

No report presented

### 12 Regional registry officer's report

**Alan Gray**

No report presented

### 13 Forthcoming events

UBSS Centenary, 9-10 Nov 19, Bristol Geography Dept.

### 14 Date of next meetings:

Saturday 23<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (GM) 10:30 Hunters

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (GM) 10:30 Hunters

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (AGM) 10:30 Hunters

### 15 Any other business

#### 15.1 Change of email BEC contact email address

BEC contact details have changed - [becreps@bec-cave.org.uk](mailto:becreps@bec-cave.org.uk)

#### 15.2 BCA insurance to include accident/life insurance

BCA insurance officer consulted feeling at the AGM as to whether members would want personal accident/life insurance adding to the BCA policy, this is an all or nothing deal so all of BCA's members should either have it or not have it. It is estimated to cost an additional £2.50 on the current BCA insurance.

This has been out for consultation on facebook & ukcaving.

The insurance will likely be decided on at the next BCA council meeting.

CSCC meeting do not have a view on this, our representative to vote according to his or her conscience at the meeting.

Meeting duration 1h40m