



Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

www.csccl.org.uk

Minutes of General Meeting – Wednesday 29 July 2020

Draft 10 August 2020

Pre Meeting Announcement by Secretary, Message from Alan Butcher - Chairman.

Dear Frank,

As you know, I discovered on the way back from the 2019 BCA AGM at Horton in Ribblesdale that Aileen had been rushed into hospital earlier in the day but did not want to let me know because she knew how important I considered attending the BCA AGM was and didn't want me to rush home and miss the meeting. That was a shock and in circumstances like that you realise that caving politics is not important at all.

I am at the same point now and so, regrettably, I am resigning both as CSCC Chairman and acting BCA Rep with immediate effect, I will not be at the CSCC meeting on Wednesday.

To my friends in caving and on the CSCC, thank you for your support over the years and apologies for allowing the lunatics to take over the asylum.

To my detractors, you really need to learn the art of semantics and not to believe everything you read on caving forums, by the time you realise that you're being played it will be too late for all of us.

Alan Butcher 28th July 2020

1 Attendance

Voting Attendees

Alan Dempster	Avon Scouts	AD	
Andrew McLeod	EUSS		
Barry Wilkinson	WRCG		
Daniel Matthews	MCG		
Dave Cooke	Cheddar CC	DC	Treasurer/Webmaster
Dave King	MNRC	DK	
Estelle Sandford	BEC		
Frank Tully	WCC	FT	Secretary
Graham Price	Cerberus	GP	C&A Officer
Ian Mildon	Axbridge CG		
Idris Williams	Shropshire Scouts	IW	
Jon Da'Casto	Bristol&DCC		
Judi Durber	EECC		
Linda Wilson	UBSS		
Peter Burgess	WCMS		
Tim Ball	SMCC	TB	

16 Voting Club Reps

Non Voting Attendees

Andrew Horeckyj		Louise Lees	TUSKA
Andrew Ward	CDG NTO	Malcolm Foyle	
Andy Sparrow		Nigel Atkinson	
Aubrey Newport		Ian Peachey	ULSA
Carmen Smith		Peter Hall	
Chris Binding		Phil Rowsell	Acting BCA Chairman
Chris Smart			(Arrived after meeting had started)
Ed Waters		Robert Scott	
Graham Mulan	UBSS	Stuart Lindsey	
Hayley Clark		Tom Chapman	



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Will Burn

2 Apologies for Absence

Alan Butcher	SMCC	AB	
Geoff Dommitt	Buckfastleigh Caving Group		
Les Williams	WCC	LW	C&A Officer

3 Vote to Elect Chairman

In light of the resignation of the chairman we need to elect a new chair for the meeting from the floor.

Judi Durber EECC proposed Ed Waters as chair for the meeting, Seconded WRCC,

Vote passed Unanimous

Statement by Ian Peachey, ULSA Rep

I'm here representing ULSA, who joined CSCC at the last meeting. We come to Mendip regularly and intend actively take part, hopefully providing a northern angle to debates and limiting the bun-fights when issues come to BCA council. However realising how contentious the issues being discussed at this meeting are, I will not be voting.

Ed Waters The meetings offers ULSA a very warm welcome.

4 Approval of minutes from meeting Wed 15th July 2019

With corrections recorded by secretary,

Vote, Zero Against, 2 Abstentions, Remainder For. Minutes Approved Nem Con

5 Chairman's report

Ed Waters (Elected for meeting)

I have had my differences with Butch but I'm sure all of us would send him our best wishes. We all need to recognise that Butch has put decades of effort representing the interests of Southern caving.

Dave Cooke proposed a vote of thanks for Alan Butcher and everything he has done for Southern caving. Seconded Estelle.

Vote passed Unanimous.

5.0 Secretary's report Frank Tully

New Members

Swansea Speleological Society,

Vote to accept into CSCC, Proposed Dave Cooke, Seconded Judi Durber. Passed Unanimous

A warm welcome into CSCC, for the Swansea Speleological Society.

6 BCA Report

Report from outgoing chairman

Brief Report on the BCA Council meeting held on 18th July 2020

Some twenty seven or so people attended the BCA Council meeting this morning. The meeting was well chaired by Mad Phil Rowsell in the absence of Les Williams.

The main point of discussion was the current legal proceedings against the Welsh Government.



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Having read up about the process of Judicial Review, I asked a question to clarify what is anticipated as a successful result.

The review process means that, if successful, the decision by the Welsh Government to exclude caving from the open access forum because it is not an outdoor sport is quashed or nullified on the grounds that the court agrees that caving is an outdoor activity covered by the CROW Act. This will be the result that is hoped for and what we are spending our money on.

I queried whether the lawyers had given a written indication of the % chances of success. The BCA Treasurer, Howard Jones, noted he had been party to correspondence between David Rose and the solicitor although this only reiterated that we had “a good chance”. Most agreed that we were likely to receive optimistic noises from the solicitor as we still be funds to continue the action.

The treasurer recommended that we agree a proposal to allocate up to £60,000 toward legal costs as we needed to continue the action and not to allocate the funds would, in effect, stop any further proceedings. This was seconded and agreed by the meeting.

The other proposals concerning the establishment of an IT Group, P&I Working Group and confirmation of voting changes were all agreed.

A number of vacancies for council roles were filled as per the agenda although proposals to fill the individual representative roles from those at the meeting were deferred until the vacancies were more widely advertised.

Another meeting is planned for early August.

Alan Butcher BCA Rep 18/07/20

6.0 Proposals to be presented to the next BCA AGM on behalf of CSCC

Vote to consider all the proposals as a block or alternatively individually.

Proposed WCC, Seconded MCG,

For: WCC, MCG, Shropshire Scouts, WRCG, EECC

Against: Avon Scouts, BEC, Cheddar, Cerberus, SMCC, WCMS, MNRC, UBSS

Abstention EUSS

Meeting will proceed to assess each proposal on its own merit.

6.1 Proposal drafted by Alan Butcher

That the arbitrary limit of £750 for Regional Council Access projects administered by the C&A Committee is in direct contravention of clause 2.1 of the BCA Constitution: that the definition of the Association includes the words “all of whom have autonomy in their own field”.

Reason: When the BCA and the “One Stop Shop” were set up, there was a fundamental agreement that Regional Councils and other bodies would be fully funded in return for agreeing to centralisation of income and expenditure with the new national body. The imposition of the limit of £750 administered by the C&A Committee gives the opportunity for access projects to be “administered” other than by financial constraints and therefore is a direct contradiction of the BCA Constitution clause 2.1. Additionally, the Funding Proposal adopted by the National Council on 11th January 2020 appears to override the imposition of this arbitrary limit.

Linda Wilson I am strongly in favour of this proposal because the regional councils are the best able to assess the suitability of proposals and this was what was intended by the statement in the constitution.



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Further discussion took place

An alternative to the tabled proposal was discussed where the limit was increased, noting that it is not uncommon for individual projects to exceed £750. Will Burns stated that in most cases approval by the C&A committee would be a formality.

6.1 as stated, proposed Cerberus, seconded UBSS

For ACG, BEC, Cerberus, WRCG, SMCC, UBSS, WCMS
Against WCC, MCG, Shropshire Scouts, MNRC, Avon Scouts, EECC, EUSS
Abstentions WRCG, Cheddar, BDCC.

The chair has a casting vote, however this is not an urgent issue so the chair chose to park this proposal and bring it back to debate at the next meeting.

Proposal to bring it back to the next meeting, Linda Wilson UBSS, Seconded Estelle BEC,

Against WCC, WRCG,
For BDCC, ACG, BEC, MNRC, Shropshire Scouts, Cheddar, Cerberus, EUSS,
 SMCC, UBSS and WCMS
Abstentions EECC

To be brought back to the next CSCC meeting.

Post Meeting Note

Subsequent to the meeting Graham Price has been in discussion with Will Burns about the approval of funding for the new gate on Manor Farm (see Item 7.2) in order to rest the new system. It has become clear that the £750 is an annual limit for each regional council and not a per-project limit. Graham and Will are continuing to explore the consequences of this.

6.2 Proposal drafted by Alan Butcher

That the BCA National Council be instructed to ensure that all software whether bespoke or purchased commercially is properly licensed and registered to the British Caving Association.

Reason: There is a concern is that in the absence of a license that BCA could lose the right to use particular software possibly at short notice. This is particularly important with the mission critical software. It is likely to be costly and difficult, if not impossible, to replace at short notice.

Dave Cooke, BCA should also own its domain names.

6.2 proposed Pete Burgess WCMS, Seconded Idris Williams Shropshire Scouts.

For BDCC, BEC, MNRC, Shropshire Scouts, Cerberus, SMCC, UBSS, WCMS,
 ACG
Against WCC, WRCG, EUSS
Abstention Cheddar, MCG, EECC

Passed.

Secretary to forward proposal to BCA Secretary



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6.3 Proposal drafted by Alan Butcher

That the BCA National Council produces an appropriate Social Media Policy. To be completed by the 2021 AGM.

Reason: That in this age of increasing use of social media, BCA has an active Facebook page, it is increasingly important that the association has a social media policy. The policy should help to protect BCA's reputation and give clear guidance to its volunteers and staff.

Proposed by Graham Price Cerberus, Seconded Linda Wilson UBSS

For	ACG, BEC, MNRC, Shropshire Scouts, UBSS, Cerberus, WCMS, SMCC
Against	WCC, WRCC
Abstention	Cheddar, EUSS, MCG, EECC

Passed

Secretary to forward proposal to BCA Secretary

6.4 Proposal Drafted By Dave Cooke

Add to the BCA Constitution: 8.15 The BCA National Council shall specify named individuals responsible for running any ballot required by the Constitution. Those individuals shall not be BCA Council members.

Reason: Any ballots run by the BCA need to be beyond criticism. As such, no Council member should be involved in the running the ballot. I.e. neither the distribution nor collection of ballot papers nor the counting of votes. The ballot would be run by trusted individuals appointed by Council but who are not members of Council.

Proposed Linda Wilson UBSS, Seconded WCMS

For	ACG BEC, Shropshire Scouts, UBSS, Cerberus, WCMS, SMCC, BDCC
Against	WCC, MNRC, WRCC, EUSS
Abstentions	MCG, EECC, Cheddar

Passed

Secretary to forward proposal to BCA Secretary



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6.5 Proposal Drafted by Dave Cooke

That the BCA National Council should consider the effect of equalising subscriptions between DIM's and CIM's on member caving clubs, publishing their findings.

Reason: The decision to equalise the CIM and DIM subscription rates may have several unintended consequences to the detriment of caving clubs.

Currently caving clubs carry out a significant part of BCA's membership administration for free. With the equalising of the CIM and DIM subscription rates there is no longer an incentive for clubs to do this. If clubs stop offering CIM membership then those members will have to join as DIMs who are more expensive and time consuming to process. Thus the hassle and costs will increase for all.

The price difference was a small but a significant nudge to encourage club membership which is acknowledged in the BCA Constitution as the best way to go caving.

The unintended consequences of this change seem anti-club. Council should quantify the impact and consider measures to mitigate any detrimental effects.

A lengthy debate took place regarding this issue.

Proposal to park this and discuss it at the next CSCC meeting, proposed Judi Durber, Seconded Linda Wilson.

For	BDCC, BEC, MNRC, Shropshire Scouts, EECC, UBSS, WCMS, SMCC, EUSS
Against	ACG
Abstention	WCC, Cheddar, Cerberus, WRCG, MCG

Proposal **Parked** until next CSCC meeting

6.6 Proposal drafted by Dave Cooke

That the BCA National Council seek assurances from BCA's insurers in respect of the FCA regulations governing the provision of insurance that the now non-voting caving cubs and other bodies remain sufficiently full members that they receive insurance as a member benefit whereas the non-voting associate group members are in a sufficiently different category of membership that they do not receive insurance as a member benefit

Reason: Insurance is a non-optional member benefit. If a choice is given then that would be regarded as selling insurance which BCA is not allowed to do. Last year BCA removed the category of uninsured club member because it that meant insurance was a choice. This applied to some 25 uninsured member clubs. They were advised to becoming associate members, the significant difference being that this class doesn't have a vote and therefore is sufficiently non-member(ish) that insurance isn't required. Running that logic in the other direction, now that club membership no longer has a vote and is virtually indistinguishable from associate membership, how is it they receive insurance as a member benefit whereas associate members don't? The concern is that BCA is selling insurance. This proposal seeks to remove that concern.

Phil Rowsell I can guarantee that I will look into this issue. Probably the best way forward is Dave Cooke to discuss it with Howard.

Dave Cooke Withdrew the proposal



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6.7 Proposal drafted by Dave Cooke

That the National Council implement the recording and live streaming (where possible) of future Annual General Meetings of the Association.

Reason: This proposal is aimed at improved engagement with the membership. The technology to do this is readily available, cheap and easy to use.

Discussion took place regarding live streaming technology.

Dave Cooke Cheddar, This is about broadcasting the meeting, I do not think it is a huge imposition on Ari, so I'm kind of keen for this to go forward.

Phil Rowsell said he would put the proposal to the IT Working Group, although they are rather busy at the moment.

Estelle BEC said that the BCA AGM will have to be held online this year and will need a similar system. Let's park this and see what they come up with.

Proposal to park the proposal until the next CSCC meeting, Estelle BEC, Seconded Dave King MNRC.

For	BDCC, BEC, MNRC, Shropshire Scouts, EECC, EUSS, SMCC
Against	Cerberus, ACG
Abstention	WCC, MCG, WRCG, WCMS, Cheddar, UBSS

Proposal Parked until next CSCC meeting

6.8 Proposal drafted by Dave Cooke

That the IT Working Group be abolished in accordance with clause 6.10 of the BCA Constitution. That a new Standing Committee be formed in accordance with clause 7 of the BCA Constitution to be known as the "IT Committee".

Reason: The existing IT Working Group's membership has expanded with time and those members now include four out of the five Regional Council webmasters. As such it better resembles the structure of a Standing Committee. A Standing Committee is more democratic in that it guarantees the Regional Councils and National bodies a voice, unlike a Working Group. BCA provides web services for many of the Regional Councils and National Bodies, so a guaranteed voice for them is appropriate. This change also reflects the increasing importance of IT in helping BCA deliver for its members.

A detailed discussion took place.

Proposal to park the proposal until the next CSCC meeting, Estelle BEC, seconded Idris Williams Shropshire Scouts.

For	ACG, BEC, MNRC, Shropshire Scouts, EECC, EUSS, SMCC, WCC
Against	None
Abstention	BDCC, MCG, WRCG, Cerberus, WCMS, UBSS, Cheddar

Proposal Parked to give the "new" arrangement 12 months to see how it works.



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6.9 Proposal drafted by Dave Cooke

That the National Council should consider the process by which proposals are put forward to the Annual General Meeting and hence to ballot and should be required to state its considered view on the merits and implications of any.

Reason: The last ballot contained far reaching constitutional changes that were never debated by BCA Council, our elected representatives. Previous BCA ballots have not been accompanied by any information giving the pros and cons. This is because Council is afraid it would be accused of bias. This is a mistake. It fails to encourage the necessary level of debate.

BCA Council representatives are elected because we trust they'll do a good job. We give them the responsibility to do the research, gain the necessary knowledge and provide answers based on a full understanding of the issues. That essential part of the decision making process is currently missing in many cases. In any ballot Council should set out the case for and against and then go on to give clear advice to the members.

A discussion took place

Phil Rowsell I do not think this proposal is needed, bear in mind I am pushing for this sort of change.

Dave Cooke stated he is happy to withdraw his proposal.

7 AOB

7.1 Chris Binding

May I kindly ask for the proposal for future CSCC meetings to be conducted via Zoom in order that attendance is increased, is more efficient, less costly, modern, and massively improves democracy and human involvement is resubmitted to the imminent meeting agenda please? I think it would be helpful for a vote on it to occur at the meeting. I was surprised to read in the minutes that it was recorded as a topic but appears to have been left to dwindle. I believe CSCC needs greater input than can realistically occur by relying on small attendances in a back room.

Ed Waters This is the second meeting held online using Zoom and it has generally been successful but I think a mixture of live and web meetings is best.

A varied discussion took place including topics such as online meeting platforms and increased democracy of online meetings, and by not having the meetings on Saturday mornings.

Ed Waters Offered to draft a White Paper on the issue, comparing different options.

Frank Tully Obviously if we are going to hold a zoom meeting in the Hunters someone will have to ask Rodger for the Hunters Wi-Fi password.



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7.2 C&A Report

The land owner of Manor farm has informed us he needs the shaft gating.

I have measured up the shaft and the gate required would be 3m x 2m. Without this expenditure the cave will have to close.

Currently there is a temporary grill in place.

Chris Binding, The cave was dug in the 60s lets make it a good job that will last another 60 years. The current block wall is cracked and is unsafe.

Graham Price The Estimated cost is £2000

Vote for continuing with gating the Manor Farm Shaft. Passed Unanimous.

7.3 BCA AGM

The BCA AGM is no longer taking place in Priddy. A live AGM is impossible in the current Covid19 crisis. The AGM will therefore be some form of online meeting.

7.4 BCA Officer

Following the resignation of Alan Butcher we need another BCA officer.

Graham Price Cerberus, proposed Linda Wilson UBSS as CSCC BCA Officer, Seconded Estelle BEC.

Vote passed Unanimous

Ed Waters asked if he could attend the next BCA council meeting as an observer.

Phil Rowsell Generally BCA council meetings do not have observers attending however I will have to look at the rules regarding this before agreeing.

8 Dates of meetings 2019-2020

Saturday	23 th	November 2019 (GM)	10:30 Hunters
Saturday	15 th	February 2020 (GM)	10:30 Hunters
Wednesday	15 th	July 2020 (GM)	19:00 Online Zoom meeting
Wednesday	29 th	July 2020 (GM)	19:00 Online Zoom meeting
Saturday	26 th	September (EGM)	19:00 Online Zoom meeting

Ed Waters Thanks for what has been a good meeting.

Phil Rowsell Thanks to everyone for a very positive meeting and moving forward with consensus.

Barry Wilkinson Asked for a vote of thanks to Ed for taking on a difficult job.

The meeting expressed its agreement.

Meeting duration 3h45m