



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Open Council Meeting, 27 October 2018, Officers' Reports

6.1. DCA Chairman's Report

The DCA is coming to a bit of a crisis point where we are short of officers to undertake the official positions, this could get worse next year when several of the long-standing officers plan to retire. It won't be the end of DCA, but we won't be able to function effectively as it is currently, and things may get missed.

Pete Knight has been a star in putting requests out via Facebook, UK Caving to encourage cavers to attend meetings, not necessary to undertake officer jobs but to show an interest in the organisation, and what we do. If we don't sort access issues, undertake conservation work important sites that we have access to that cavers take for granted, access could be lost forever. The more volunteers we have, the easier the jobs become, everybody has a different set of skill sets.

I am in the process of getting job descriptions together for the current officer positions, this will allow us to look at the jobs, potentially merging roles together, and this will show the jobs, making it easier for assistants to be used within each job role. For example, the secretary job could be split into 3 parts - Meetings Sec, Membership Sec and General Correspondence, all of which can be done by a different person if needed. In terms of the other roles, we might fold some roles into others or eliminate some of them completely.

I am aware that several of our officers including myself are having a tough time managing the work / volunteer balance, the former pulling on each of us a lot more, due to fact it allows us to live and do our hobby. If anybody is struggling, please speak out as I would rather have you doing little rather than sitting there struggling and wanting to pack it all in all together.

Wayne Sheldon
24/09/2018

6.2. DCA Secretary Report

We don't have a secretary at the moment but with Jenny Potts acting secretary but recently I have told her to leave everything and the current officers will pick it up. Myself and Angus are covering the DCA secretary email address. I have been emailing out to all members; the following has been sent out during the last four months.

- DCA Council Minutes from June 2018 meeting.
- DCA Agenda and Officers Report for the forthcoming meeting
- DCA and BCA Training Calendar

Membership:

Angus has checked all the membership records against the bank account records and several individual members haven't renewed this year, so these will be chased up and asked to pay before we drop them as members.

Wayne Sheldon
17/10/2018

6.3. Treasurer / Webmaster Report

The current account balances and income and expenditure to date have been submitted with this report. Significant expenses since last meeting include purchase of new drill and angle grinder and call out charge for securing Herne Hill cave after vandalism. I will shortly be raising invoices for SSSI conservation work with Natural England. Income from sales of COPD continues to be stable, mainly via Moore Books and Starless River.

Account Summary 31/12/2018

Account title	Balance
Lloyds Current Account	£19,996.19
RBS Current Account	£310.24
RBS Deposit Account	£1.01
Unity Trust Current Account	£0.00
Unity Trust Deposit Account	£0.00

Profit and Loss for period covering 01/01/2018 to 17/10/2018

Income	£0.00	Expenses	£0.00
Subscriptions & Entry Fees	£271.00	General Admin	£0.00
Publications	£0.00	Post	£90.44
COPD	£605.60	Materials, printing, copying etc	£765.27
Newsletters	£181.20	Conservation, Access etc.	£0.00
Donations	£0.00	Travel	£221.84
General Fund	£36.50	Other	£2263.50
BCA Grants	£0.00	Publications	£0.00
Training	£450.00	Newsletter	£101.29
Awards and Grants	£0.00	Training	£0.00
Other	£3,597.56	Post, telephone, email etc.	£10.00
Bank Interest	£1.66	Training events, Instruction etc.	£450.00
		SSSI Conservation Work	£0.00
		Projects 2014/2015	£24.00
Total Revenue	£5143.92	Total Expenses	£3,745.46
Net Income for period	£1,398.46		

Action Items

005 UCF Meeting reports etc. Still waiting for reports

012 Audit volunteers. Audit promoted on DCA site and pdci twitter account, see CW for further info.

022 Entrance photographs. Significant number of entrance pictures after recent publicity, mainly from a few people. List of caves requiring entrance photographs now available on web site.

DCA Webmaster Report

thedca.org.uk. The DCA web site has had few changes other than regular reports, news items and occasional software upgrades. Improved labelling of SSSI audit reports now implemented with date included in labels.

Cave Registry. Access entries can now be formatted with “Markdown”, a simple, readable text mark-up language which allows headings, lists and simple tables to be entered (see Bagshawe Cavern for example).

PeakDistrictCaving.info. New entrance photographs online. Markdown formatting as described above applied to access descriptions. Minor layout changes applied. Regular site software upgrades applied.

Angus Sawyer
17/10/2018

6.4. Conservation Officer Report

Natural England funding and conservation work funded to date

Natural England has provided funding for conservation project work in 2017-2018. To date, nearly all the £5000 has now been allocated. This funding goes toward equipment hire an/or purchase and ‘payment in kind’ for labour in projects linked to conservation and safe access in SSSI systems. Many thanks to cavers that reported to us issues that needed resolving and to Pete Knight and the volunteers that worked on the projects and finally, to Dan Abrahams for securing the money for us from NE!

A resume of the project work to date using this year’s Natural England funding is below: -
Longcliffe (Castleton SSSI) Shaft top and lid.

Funding was provided for the construction of the shaft top which involved encasing the protruding pipe with a square wall made of concrete blocks and jacketed with natural stone and finishing the cap with a flat slab with belay tube recesses for abseil access. The grille, that is currently being made, is a custom design intended for long term dual use: There will be an access hatch secured with a Derbyshire key system for general caving use but the grille will also be entirely removable for emergency access and rescue or to facilitate rope skills training.

Son of Longcliffe’ (Castleton SSSI, Part of Longcliffe)

Work was required at this site to enable easy and safe access for caver visits, inspections and monitoring. This was achieved with the installation of a large steel staple above the grille for rigging, and various resin anchors placed above and below the grille and in the internal shaft. Via Ferrata staples were also installed at suitable points down the shaft to enable safe climbing and additionally a back-up attachment.

Many thanks to Phil Wolstenholme, John Sharp, Charlie Cooley, and all the other folk from TSG for their devotion with both the above projects.

Hillocks mine (Upper Lathkill SSSI) Wharf climbing shaft.

The pack wall on the north side of the shaft collapsed when a team of cavers were climbing it in August. An area of unstable rocks was found to be ineffectively supporting one end of an existing RSJ. Over a period of 3 weeks work commenced and involved placing warning signage on the lid, underpinning the region of instability with steel stemples and a steel grid and also reinforced concrete and stonework. Many thanks to Alan Brentnall, Roy Rodgers, Pete Dell and John Martin.

Speedwell. (Castleton SSSI) Bung ladder.

The ladder is an essential safe link between the Speedwell and Peak systems. Over recent years the ladder has been put under strain from several bouts of major flooding. The cascading flood water has made the ladder vibrate, loosened the securing brackets and caused the ladder side rails to splay and for several of the rungs to fall out. Repair work involved providing SRT access for the work to commence, removing the old ladder to repair it and then reinstalling it. Many thanks to Ade Pedley, Alan Brentnall and others and John Harrison’s cooperation and floating taxi service!

Natural England National Nature Reserve voluntary work

Cavers have also been continuing to assist Natural England Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve staff with monitoring, advice, maintenance and repair work to mine openings requiring gates and covers to safeguard stock and the walking general public. The NNR team is responsible for the 5 NNRs in the White Peak, including Lathkill and Cressbrook NNRs. They are unable to work in or around caves and mines and recognize the importance of the voluntary work we do. As a consequence, they give 'payment in kind' to the DCA for the hours worked on jobs and ensure materials and tools are provided and/or any money spent is reimbursed. Many thanks to the individual volunteer workers from various clubs to date, especially Adam Russell. More work may come our way again in the foreseeable future!

Tools for the job

I have purchased 2 long awaited power tools with money from the DCA's conservation fund for our conservation project work: A Bosch Drill (GBH 18 V-26 F 18V Brushless SDS-Plus Hammer Drill inc Chuck, quick charger and 2x 5Ah batteries) and Bosch grinder (GWS18-125VLi 18V Angle Grinder, 2x 5Ah batteries and quick charger). It is hoped that we shall no longer have to beg, borrow (or steal!) folk's personal tools for DCA projects!

Hamps and Manifold

The National Trust have recruited a willing volunteer to help with the monitoring and maintenance of caves in the Hamps and Manifold valley. Pete Wagstaff is helping Paul Mortimer with this work and doing some bolting.

SSSI monitoring

SSSI cave monitoring is underway for Natural England and the target for its completion is before next April if possible. As part of our caving trips in SSSI cave and mine systems in the White Peak, I have asked cavers for their help with this monitoring. Information has been disseminated via the DCA membership, on the DCA website and the Uk caving forum and I think also on Facebook and twitter too. Many thanks to Wayne, Angus and Pete K for doing this for me. The SSSI website has the facility to indicate whether a site has been 'done' or is still 'pending' and completed forms sent to me are then forwarded to Dan at Natural England.

Hidden Earth and the launch of Pooles Cavern a 'British Cave Monitoring Centre'

Hidden Earth was a success again and included various conservation related talks, e.g.s: Setting up Special Interest Groups (SIG) in Cave Biology and Hydrology, photographing archaeological excavations in Greece, Caving in Chalk and Jess Eades gave another great talk on Bats abroad. John Gunn also took the opportunity to announce that Pooles Cavern is to be 'British Cave Monitoring Centre'. The Buxton Civic Association and BCRA have made an agreement, lasting from 1 January 2018 to December 2022 and may be longer, to use Pooles cavern as a site from where cave studies of various types can take place. Data loggers have been donated by Gemini data loggers. It is hoped that learning/educational establishments and cavers with an interest in science, in addition to University students, will get involved in projects and studies of their own design.

There is a general feeling that cavers, especially students are becoming more interested in cave science and even actively so, which is great news for Conservation. This is largely due to the continued enthusiasm for cave science that exudes from John Gunn and from also having attended or read material from BCRA events and Eurospeleo Protection Symposiums.

DCA website and Cave Life of Derbyshire addition

Andrew Lewington has now finished and uploaded Derbyshire section on the Cave Life of Britain website. There is now a link for this in Conservation & Access section of the DCA website.

Access and Conservation issues

There seems to have been an increase in people interested in accessing caves and mine systems. The advent of on line multimedia, google maps and the on-line cave registry may have enabled this phenomenon and it has not been without its problems! Whereas the majority of these explorers mean no harm there seem to be a few that are not aware of the value of the cave or mine that they are visiting, and it results in littering, graffiti and damage to gates and their fixings. One site even began receiving visits from walkers who followed Google map directions down a private road towards that cave, believing that they were on a public right of way. This one incident has been partially resolved.

Masson Hill and Lathkill areas seem to be hot spots for the increase in caving activity and potential damage. Giants Hole near Castleton is another. By regular monitoring we shall see if any mitigation is necessary and if it is, then a combination of cleanups, repair work, careful interpretation and calm caver to caver conversations, will be the preferred option!

Christine Wilson

11/10/2018

6.5. Access Officer Report

6.6. Legal and Insurance Officer Report

Chatsworth Licences

The 3year licences for access to the two Lathkill sites (Garden Path and Upper Entrance) became due for renewal in March this year, along with the licence for access to the Ashford Black Marble Mine (due on 1st October). Their renewal is very much a formality and the new licences will run until 2021. At the moment I am still awaiting receipt of the signed paperwork to confirm renewal, together with the usual accompanying letter Chatsworth send me to permit outdoor centres the use of the Marble Mine.

Lathkill Dale

In August I was made aware of a change of ownership affecting a stretch of the north bank of the dale. I was asked to furnish details of DCA's liability insurance cover and make clear how the cover would indemnify the new owner. This I did in an email to Alec Neville, an agent of the owner, at the request of John Gunn. I have not heard of problems arising in that area since then and am grateful for John Gunn's help in alerting DCA and his advice on maintaining access there.

Holme Chert Mines

The situation has settled into a permanent stand-off, with the owner of Holme Hall and Holme Mine continuing to refuse all access via the original Main Entrance. Officially, permission from Joe Oldfield is for entry to Home Bank Mine only, via one of the alternative entrances. Visitors are asked to report damage to any of these other entrances to Joe or to DCA. I understand PICA members are restricted to use of certain specific entrances to the complex for insurance reasons.

Pete Mellors

12/10/2018

6.7. Project Officer Report

Action Register:

- 020 On Hold until required. We have a new Li-ion Bosch grinder now. Recommend selling the DeWalt or donating to the Equipment Team, as DCA Projects will not have a use for it.
- 022 Ongoing. I'll get this done during the winter when I have a bit more time.
- 023 Ongoing? Requested Treasurer check to see if we were paid. I would probably drop this now as we have a good amount of money coming in this year from NE.
- 025 Ongoing
- 032 On Hold. Long term project when time allows.
- 034 Ongoing. Remove from register.
- 036 On Hold. PICA and PHE are in discussion but no solid information yet.
- 038 Ongoing. Lid being fabricated. Anchor installation to follow over winter.
- 039 Ongoing. Winter project when radon levels have dropped.
- 040 If referring to Kirkland Shaft then Discharged. If referring to upper entrance, then Ongoing but almost completed.
- 041 Discharged.
- 044 Discharged? Offered and expenses form supplied.

Not a lot happened in this last period due to work commitments and lack of people breaking things.

The Bung Ladder in Speedwell received some attention via the TSG. Although not involved as a DCA person, I was there and can confirm that this is now (mostly) sorted and open again. We did place some DCA anchors here when the ladder was gone, and Bob has a topo for those.

A job at Hillocks raised its head recently and I've been supplying materials to Alan Brentnall for this work, which he is kindly coordinating. This is completed now and I'm sure Alan Brentnall will report on the actual work done.

I have seen the Devonshire top gate in the last few weeks and, although it is not yet fitted, it does look strong enough to keep the orcs in. Top work by the Acclimatize team there. I'll push to see if we can get a completion date for this job soon.

I got run over before I could visit Cressbrook dale to cover a hole over. Christine managed to complete this work in my absence, so I will leave her to report on it.

Today I have been contacted by a business in Matlock asking to have a cave inspected on their (commercial property) land. I shall most likely do this as a DCA job and will update on specifics at the meeting.

Pete Knight
7/10/2018

6.8.A. Equipment Officer Report

Several bolting jobs have been completed over the last few months, firstly ten anchors were installed in Masson Mine at the request of PICA to facilitate group safety. With the help of a very dry summer anchors have also been installed in two of the Manifold Valley caves. Four anchors in Riverside Pot- Upper Entrance and six in Darfar Pot – Upper Entrance. I am organising the production of the topos to be included in the DCA Rigging guide.

I note from the Installer database that most of the installers are due for their three yearly re-assessment. I propose to contact all current and relapsed installers to check if they are still prepared to contribute to the anchor installation programme and will subsequently organise revalidation training events on those that respond positively.

I have not, as yet, bought the tackle bags for the use of the installers and contacted the new BCA E&T Convenor over the 20kN gauge and Pelican case for the Hydrajaws. Note to self "kick up the derriere".

All the equipment is in good shape and I still have twenty-two anchors, one tube of resin and 14 nozzles in stock. I have had to purchase a 7mm SDS drill bit for cutting the retaining groove to lock the anchor permanently in position, a pack of respirators and four 16mm dia. brass wire tube brushes for cleaning out holes. I will bring the receipts to the meeting.

As you are probably aware there has been a change of BCA E&T Convenor which in the scheme of things would not cause DCA any problems. However, as I understand it, he is trying to organise the production of the CNCC IC anchor so that it is available to other regions. As I understand it the only two advantages of the IC anchor is that it can be removed by drilling down the sides and twisting out as used to happen with the Eco anchors and that it requires a smaller drill hole thus extending the number of holes that can be drilled on one battery. I personally am not of the opinion that DCA should contemplate the use of this anchor in the Peak District. Having been continuously involved in anchor testing for many years I know that the BP anchor is substantially stronger than any other anchor so far tested and that removing it is virtually impossible without subjecting it to forces well in excess of 30kN sometimes up to 65kN. The mode of failure on an axial test is always substrate failure. Even when an anchor is pulled halfway out of the hole they still held in excess of 20kN. With the drills we have coupled with the number of batteries (4) we have never had a lack of capacity. So the problem DCA may face is concerned with the continuing availability of the BP anchor. I would appreciate the views of Council on this matter as to what course of action should be taken, if any.

I informed Council that I was contemplating retirement from Equipment Officer as of the next AGM. However, at the tender age of 75 there are still several outstanding jobs I would like to complete i.e. the Crabwalk Traverse, the rest of the Manifold Caves and Hungerhill Swallet. So, with Councils permission, I would like to carry for another year unless someone has a better candidate in mind. That way I can leave the way clear and in good shape for my successor.

I would personally like to thank all the installers and the many others who have contributed in one way or another to the maintenance of the anchor programme this year. Correct anchor installation is not an easy job and without their enthusiasm and commitment caving would be a much more dangerous activity.

Bob Dearman
12/10/2018

6.8.B. Cave Atmosphere Monitoring Report.

1. Problems reported. Again, no problems of high CO₂ have been reported, making this a record year (so far) for clean air in Derbyshire subterranean sites. Probably due to the high pressure, and low levels of ground water.

2. Measurements. Measurements have been taken at Lathkill head Cave (Upper Entrance, Waiting Room, Lathkiller Hall), Cromford Sough (entering via main entrance, exit via duck pond and sampling as far as the main collapse) and Silvereye Mine.

3. Equipment. DCA's new PS500 is working well, and DCRO now have the software and equipment which we can make use of to retrieve logged readings which can give a fuller picture, filling the gaps between manually recorded readings associated with landmarks in the cave.

4. Other Usage. The PS500 was borrowed and used by a group to monitor air quality while visiting a ganister mine. The air was reported to be perfect throughout.

5. Measurements.

Cave/Mine	Date	O ₂	CO ₂	Location at Site
Lathkill Upper	21/08/2018	20.90	0.00	Surface
Lathkill Upper	21/08/2018	20.90	0.00	Waiting Room
Lathkill Upper	21/08/2018	20.70	0.38	Lathkiller Hall
Cromford Sough	11/09/2018	20.90	0.00	Surface
Cromford Sough	11/09/2018	20.70	0.60	Just after pond junction
Cromford Sough	11/09/2018	20.30	0.16	First major shaft
Cromford Sough	11/09/2018	20.40	0.13	Branch inlet junction
Cromford Sough	11/09/2018	20.40	0.11	Shaft 2 after branch
Cromford Sough	11/09/2018	20.10	0.16	Shaft 3 after branch
Cromford Sough	11/09/2018	20.00	0.35	Before timbered section
Cromford Sough	11/09/2018	19.50	0.45	Low timbered section
Silvereye	09/10/2018	20.90	0.00	Surface
Silvereye	09/10/2018	20.70	0.04	Lower level end collapse
Silvereye	09/10/2018	20.40	0.08	Foot of raise to top level
Silvereye	09/10/2018	20.50	0.12	Top of raise to yop level
Silvereye	09/10/2018	20.50	0.06	Foot of first raise on left
Silvereye	09/10/2018	20.50	0.02	Junction with rift
Silvereye	09/10/2018	20.60	0.01	Foot of raise in far left passage
Silvereye	09/10/2018	20.50	0.05	Foot of climb in first right passage

Alan Brentnall
10/10/2018

6.9. Training Officer Report.

6.10. Newsletter Editor

Things have not gone well for The Derbyshire Caver since my last report to the Council meeting in June. I was unable to produce a Summer issue due to an almost complete lack of material; promised articles sadly failed to materialise.

I am optimistic that an Autumn issue will be published next month provided the material that I have been promised turns up!

At the end of the day, if Peak District cavers don't want to contribute then there's not much that can be done.

Hopefully, this winter will see some more progress on the index and I'll maybe scan two or three old issues for upload to the website to see how this turns out.

As always, my sincere thanks to everyone who has submitted articles or photographs for publication; I wish that there were more of you! Please help me (and DCA) out by keeping stuff coming. If you haven't previously sent anything in for publication, please think seriously about doing so.

Finally, a reminder that I shall be stepping down at the next AGM having completed 5 years in the job – doesn't time fly?

Mike Higgins
13/10/2018

Publications Sales report

Caves of the Peak District continues to sell steadily. So far this year we have sold a total of 62 copies, only one of which was to an individual, the rest were sold at the 35% discounted trade price to 3 different commercial outlets. The total taken in sales so far this year is £813.00, and we have just over 600 copies remaining to be sold - so several year's worth at present rates.

DCA Newsletter, "The Derbyshire Caver" continues to sell in small numbers through the Smithy Cafe in Monash and Peak District Mining Museum on a sale-or-return basis. Only two issues have gone out this year, in January and May, so the income far this year is for issues 146 (Nov. 2017) and 147 (Jan. 2018) and comes to £28.70; we won't receive payment for issue 148 (May 2018) until the next issue is taken to the shops.

Following the decision to make the Newsletters from issue 148 downloadable from the DCA website, free of charge, we now have a print run of less than 50: 15 go to shops, 17 are paid subscriptions for printed copies (£10.00 for 4 issues), 9 copies go free of charge to DCA member clubs who want them for their Libraries, 5 copies go free of charge to other caving Libraries, including the British Caving Library and we always print 3 extra copies to allow for a copy for authors who are not DCA members.

Cave Conservation Audit sales for this year have been zero, but this is not a problem as we only hold a couple of copies of each and I am able to print more on demand as I have the pdfs and a suitable printer.

I am happy to continue to deal with publication sales since I have the invoicing systems sorted and the contacts to deal with our two sales outlets and most of the income is now paid by direct bank transfer straight into DCA's bank account.

Jenny Potts
12/10/2018

6.11. Cave Registry Secretary

The Cave Registry is up-to-date and working fine, with some new data occasionally trickling in from users. The new 'Hidden' flag is working fine, and I have added a couple of very important mine sites

(with some natural features) that currently have no access agreement in place – there are plans to add several more venues in this way in the near future.

The recent online request for entrance photos has been very successful, with many new sites being submitted by cavers in the last two weeks, and these are being added to the Peak District Caving website by Angus as they come in.

The Peak-Speedwell online micro-guides, formerly on the original H&H Peak District Caving website, have now been re-edited and updated where necessary (with original credits remaining but references removed) and they could do with reviewing by someone else - if anyone would like to volunteer I can email them all over. Once cleared they will be uploaded to the site. Further related micro-guides will be updated as time allows.

Phil Wolstenholme
11/10/2018

8.1. BCA Matters

BCA Council Meeting 6 Oct. 2018 report

Firstly the Minutes of this Council Meeting and the accompanying very detailed Reports to Council are already available on the BCA website: british-caving.org.uk, so you can read it all for yourselves. I have here picked out specific items which I felt would be of particular interest or importance to DCA.

The meeting opened with the announcement that Nick Williams, Acting Secretary of BCA, was having to withdraw from all participation in BCA business because of personal issues. He has been an important contributor to BCA (and before that, to NCA), for many years and his contribution will be much missed.

There have been problems with issuing the Minutes of the BCA AGM in June 2018. The BCA Administrative Support Assistant became seriously ill shortly after the meeting and has had to resign her position, adding to the pressure on Nick Williams. The BCA Chairman, Les Williams, and the Treasurer, Robin Weare, are attempting to re-construct the Minutes from the partial recording of the meeting and notes taken and hope to have a draft version on the website before too long. Mary Wilde, BCA's Training Administrator and the Librarian at the British caving Library, was co-opted to take the Minutes for this Council meeting (and has produced them in an astonishingly short time!); Matt Ewles (CNCC Secretary), has agreed to take on the task for the January meeting while the search is on for an Acting Secretary to see us through to the AGM in June 2019.

There considerable discussion on subscription levels for 2019 and the level of insurance cover required, after which it was agreed that:

- Even if the insurance cover needed to rise to £10m, BCA could cover the rise from its reserves and would not need to raise the subscription levels till 2020. It was felt we should resist raising the cover to this level for as long as possible.
- To encourage membership of young cavers, BCA membership would be free for Under 18's, the crucial date being age on 1st. January, when subscriptions are due.
- As the Insurance Manager (Nick Williams), had resigned and the new insurance manager, Howard Jones, would not take over until the new year, BCA would continue with its present level of Public Liability cover of £5m for the time being but would review this next year. Special cases where a higher level of cover is required can be accommodated within this.

In response to the paper put forward by CNCC, it was agreed that the Finance Committee, consisting of the BCA Treasurer and the regional treasurers, be formally approved as a BCA Working Group. This Group would communicate by email and review the funding rules covering support for regional bodies, making a progress report in January and final recommendations no later than the April meeting.

There were a number of proposals from Jane Allen, the new Convenor of the Publications and Information Standing Committee, aimed at making BCA seem more relevant to young cavers and encouraging caver participation in its decision making. In part this requires permission from all the Club Individual Members to allow their emails to be used to send BCA information electronically, in particular the BCA Newsletter, direct to each individual rather than via the club secretaries. Tied up with this is the need for a form of electronic voting for proposals put to BCA AGM's so that the whole membership can participate, rather than voting being limited solely to those present in person at the meeting - a discussion paper on this has already been circulated to BCA Council members.

The re-vamp of the Training Committee continues, with proposals for a stack of training events open to club and individual cavers. The relationship between the Training Committee and the Qualifications Management Committee, which deals with assessing Cave Leaders and Instructors, is progressing.

There are two new initiatives which are being put out to BCA members for their comments:

Safeguarding: the BCA Safeguarding Officer, Chris Boardman, has prepared draft Guidelines and a Safeguarding Policy for BCA and seeks comments from members with a view to finalising these documents by the AGM in 2019.

Equality: This is being dealt with by Louise Baddeley, noting that BCA has an existing "Diversity" policy, but not an "Equality" policy. Louise seeks feedback on the paper with a view to reporting back to the January meeting.

I felt that this was an extremely positive meeting with very detailed papers prepared and circulated in advance - all of which are posted on the BCA website along with the Minutes of the meeting. There is a real drive to make BCA more responsive to its members and more relevant to young cavers, building on what has already been achieved.

Jenny Potts
12/10/2018