

Cambrian Caving Council AGM 2017

Secretary's Report

The council were awarded £500 by Sport Wales (SW) and continue to be recognised as the representative body for the sport of caving in 2016/2017. Since Sport Wales has changed its 'year end' to April we only find out if the application has been successful after the AGM. An application has been submitted for this coming year and I hope it will continue to be successful as it provides money for training and also some safety work in underground sites. Recently Sport Wales have been reviewing how their member clubs operate as they are concerned about the governance issues and to this end have issued some guidance documents which CCC need to review and incorporate into the standing orders for committee members. I don't think these are particularly onerous and they mainly deal with codes of conduct and conflicts of interest which we already abide by. The matter will need to be discussed by the committee to make sure the guidelines are acceptable and it shouldn't have any impact on the CCC constitution.

While on the subject of Sport Wales I should mention that the issue of child/vulnerable persons protection will be a topic in the next year. As you will be aware the issue of child abuse in the football world has been widely reported and SW clearly wants to make sure the same problems do not surface elsewhere. CCC follows the child protection guidelines provided by the BCA and I have mentioned the need to review these at a recent BCA council and Bob Mehew said he will look at this. With regard to child/vulnerable person protection in CCC member clubs, I have reported to SW that most clubs require children to be supervised by a parent or guardian whilst underground and most club huts adopt the same rule or refuse to allow children to stay overnight. The bigger clubs, like SWCC, who regularly have children overnight have a child protection officer to ensure safe working practices.

Most clubs provide underground training for new members and this is generally done on an 'ad hoc' basis with the new members joining a trip with experienced leaders who can supervise and impart knowledge on safe techniques, hazards and conservation. Generally children will be accompanied by their parent or guardian, however as their skill and experience grows they may want to go on trips unaccompanied. Clubs need to be aware that in this case they need to collectively take responsibility for protection and if any club member thinks something untoward is happening then it needs to be investigated. Commercial training organisations will have the correct certifications in place.

I have attended the quarterly BCA council meetings in my role as representative of a Regional Caving Council and can report that a considerable amount of time has been taken up discussing the changes in the BCA constitution required so that they can campaign for CroW access. Another postal ballot will take place later this year and I implore everyone to try and attend the BCA AGM in June where the motions to put on the ballot form will be discussed again. Conservation has also been a hot topic and Andrew Hinde has produced some documents which are freely available on the CCC website and elsewhere.

I had promised to try and deal with changes to the CCC constitution to allow BCA DIMS (Directly Insured members) to have a say in the running of CCC rather than leave it entirely to the clubs. DCA do this by having a vote in 'house of clubs' and another in the 'house of members including DIMS' with both needed to pass resolutions. This is the method adopted by the BCA and is a bit unwieldy and I would like something simpler. However since I am stepping down after three years in the post I will leave that to my successor to grasp that particular nettle.

Cave Access Limited has had a fairly busy year and the agreement with NRW and WG has been renewed for 2017. The number of people registering and the number of trips is a bit down on the 2015 figures – this was expected as we knew there would be an initial surge of interest in the first year. We managed to add Hafna Mine to the portfolio, but sadly, must report that negotiations with NRW over access to Draethen Lead Mines have stalled. Despite our efforts to keep up communication channels open they have stonewalled us with regard to the issue of bats and have ignored a report from a bat expert that would have allowed access in the summer months. We are at a loss as to how to move forward and so have voluntarily removed the site from the portfolio. **There is no official access to Draethen Mines under the CAL agreement.** We do know that some clubs and individuals have ventured in and we cannot condone this. We know that the mine will be visited regardless of any NRW pronouncement and feel that they are missing the point that under the CAL regime there is some control and bat disturbance is likely to be reduced.

Dave Tyson