



Minutes of the 2007 AGM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the British Cave Research Association held on Saturday 22 September 2007 at 17.00 at Tewkesbury school, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.

The meeting was declared quorate with twenty two members attending.

1 Appointment of Recorder

The Honorary Secretary, Ursula Collie, was appointed as recorder of the 2007 AGM.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Elsie Little.

3. Minutes of Previous AGM

IT WAS PROPOSED by Allan Richardson and SECONDED by Paul Mann that:-

- *The Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 23rd September 2006 at Leek High School, Leek, Staffordshire be approved.*

The motion was passed unanimously.

4. Matters arising

The Chair reported that there had been a turbulent time working towards getting the membership records in a suitable format. This task was nearly complete. Thanks were due to the BCA Membership Secretary, Glynn Jones and David Gibson of BCRA, for their efforts.

5. Council Report

The report of Council was circulated. The Chair reported that BCA is now up and running and the role of BCRA is to concentrate on the promotion of Cave Science. Valuable work is being carried out via the Cave Science and Technology Research Initiative. The Cave Science Symposium and the Technology Symposium were well attended and interesting work was presented.

Membership has declined due to confusion over the change to membership via BCA. However, BCRA now finds that members are coming back since they have realised that their standing order does not secure membership of BCRA and that they also need to be members of BCA. The membership numbers are becoming more healthy and BCRA is itself financially healthy. There is continuing work to be done in the promotion of Cave Science and the expansion of the membership.

We further face a challenge in dealing with the archive material that we hold and that may become available in the future and we need to consider how this will be made available to the membership and other interested parties in an appropriate manner.

It was noted that Council's report was incorrect in that it should state that Mick Day is a member of Council whereas Clive Gardner is not a member of Council.

The Treasurer reported that BCRA has some £260,000.00 in its coffers. This includes the Balcombe Legacy. It should be our aim that membership subscriptions should fund membership benefits. In the longer term we will have to rely on legacies and donations for our charitable work outside the provision of member benefits. A discussion took place concerning the recent decrease in membership numbers and the challenge of funding in the long term. A further discussion ensued about the difficulty that certain members are still paying by standing order in the belief that this secures them BCRA Membership and that because we have no way of tracing these members, and we cannot grant them BCRA Membership independently of BCA Membership, their membership fees are being treated as a contribution to BCRA's charitable purposes. The Chairman estimated that the timetable to resolve these issues will be a year.

IT WAS PROPOSED by Terry Whittaker and SECONDED by Jenny Potts that:-

- *The report of Council be approved.*

The motion was passed unanimously.

6. Income and Expenditure Accounts

The Treasurer explained that the accounts showed a small surplus. As a charity BCRA does not aim to make losses or profits.

IT WAS PROPOSED by Jenny Potts and SECONDED by Paul Mann that:-

- *The income and expenditure accounts and balance sheet be approved.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

7. Amendments to Constitution

7.1 Reduction of size of quorum

The first proposed amendment was to reduce the quorum for Council Meetings from eight to four. The Chair explained that this was to make Council Meetings more effective. The Chair also explained that currently there are twenty two to twenty three Council Members representing an organisation which only has three hundred and twenty members. It is desirable to streamline BCRA activity given that it is no longer concerned with wider issues such as access and insurance. It is therefore logical to reduce the quorum for Council Meetings. There was a discussion concerning the mechanism concerning the casting vote and the numbers to be needed eventually for the streamlined Council.

IT WAS PROPOSED by Joanne Whistler and SECONDED by Dick Willis that:-

- *Clause J3 of the Constitution be amended by the replacing of "8" by "4".*

The motion was carried with one vote against and one abstention.

7.2 Change to date of end of financial year

The second proposed amendment to the Constitution was a housekeeping amendment designed to bring the financial year of the Association into line with the calendar year by replacing in Clause M2 "31st March" by "31st December". The Treasurer explained that this was to fit in with the BCA and Ghar Parau Fund year end.

IT WAS PROPOSED by Andy Eavis AND SECONDED by Bob Mehew that:-

- *Clause M2 of the Constitution be amended by replacing "31st March" by "31st December"*

The motion was carried unanimously.

8. Future Amendments to Constitution

The Chair reported his intention during the coming year to embark upon a major review of BCRA's Constitution with the twin objects of making sure the Constitution is relevant to the modern role of BCRA and supports and assists the working of Council. Changes are desired to be made for housekeeping reasons and to strengthen Council's ability to support Cave Science and the membership. There is no intention to change the objects of the Constitution.

9. Further Motions

It was PROPOSED by John Gunn and SECONDED by Tony Waltham that:

- *The BCRA AGM should be held during or immediately after the annual Cave Science meeting.*

Discussion took place about the venue and timing of the AGM. The view was expressed that it was a problem obtaining sufficient attendance at Hidden Earth and it would be better to hold the AGM at a Cave Science meeting. There is part of the Cave Science community that does not attend Hidden Earth. We might achieve better attendance and attendance by younger members if the AGM were held at a Cave Science meeting. The Chair agreed to put an amendment before the membership at the same time as the constitutional amendments. No vote was held on the motion.

10. AOB

In conclusion the Chair expressed satisfaction at seeing so many members present at the AGM and asked that all members should become involved in the process of changing BCRA and let him have their thoughts and input.

The meeting closed at 18.30 hours.

Ursula Collie, BCRA Secretary