Appendix 2

Draft Minutes of the 2025 BCRA AGM

These minutes will be presented for approval at the 2026 AGM.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the British Cave Research Association held on Saturday 12th October 2025 as a joint in-person and online event. The meeting was held during the 36th BCRA Cave Science Symposium at the University of Bristol.

The BCRA Chairperson, Professor John Gunn, declared the Meeting open at 12.25 BST. At least twenty voting members were identified from the attendance list including those online, and so the meeting was declared quorate. The meeting closed at 13.15 BST.

1. Appointment of Recorder

Dave Shearsmith, BCRA Secretary, was appointed as Recorder. Additionally, an audio transcript of the Zoom meeting was prepared to aid in producing the minutes.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Russel Myers, Emily Tilby, Chloe Snowling and Andy Eavis.

3. Minutes of Previous AGM

The minutes of the 2024 AGM had been published online at **bcra.org.uk/agm**.

Motion for approval of AGM minutes:
It is proposed that the minutes of the 2024 AGM be accepted. **Proposed by** Dave Shearsmith, **Seconded by** John Gunn**.** The motion was carried unanimously.

4. Matters arising from those Minutes

None reported.

5. Chairman's report

The Chair gave a review of the Association's activities since the 2024 AGM. This will form part of the summary given in the Annual Report for 2025 that we submit to the Charity Commission, and is summarised below.

Members of Council in 2025
The ***trustees*** form the charity's governing ***Council***. There are ten members of Council elected by the members, plus the President (chosen by Council); and up to three additional trustees co-opted by Council from time to time. This totals 14 Trustees. In alphabetic order, the 2025 BCRA Trustees were:

Simon Bottrell (President), Andy Eavis, Andy Farrant (Treasurer), John Gunn (Chairman & Conservation Officer), Russell Myers, Rostam Namaghi (co-opted; BCA Chairman), Jenny Potts (British Caving Library Co-ordinator), Mike Rogerson (co-opted), David Shearsmith (Secretary & Safeguarding Officer), Chloe Snowling (co-opted; Foreign Officer & Liaison with GPF), Emily Tilby (online seminars), Jo White, Les Williams (Hidden Earth), Linda Wilson.

Members of Council for 2026
By the 30th of September nomination forms had been received from the following persons, each of whom is duly elected to Council:

Simon Bottrell (President 2025-2027); Andy Eavis; Andy Farrant (Treasurer); John Gunn (Chairman & Conservation Officer); Russell Myers; Jenny Potts (British Caving Library Co-ordinator); David Shearsmith (Secretary); Jo White; Linda Wilson.

As there are only 10 elected places Emily will be co-opted onto Council and the other 10 are duly elected. Rostam Namaghi, the Chair of BCA will also be co-opted onto Council. Dave Shearsmith has decided not to seek election and is thanked for serving as Secretary, and as Safeguarding Officer, since 2023. During that time, he has revived the monthly BCRA Newsletter and written or updated BCRA policies to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission, as well as undertaking many other tasks. Dave has kindly agreed to continue as Safeguarding Officer until a replacement can be found, and Jo White has agreed to act as Interim Secretary.

The Chairman asked if there were any nominations from the floor for the post of Secretary, but there were none.

Whilst we would encourage more BCRA members to consider serving on Council it is not necessary to be a Council member to contribute to the Association. BCRA are particularly grateful to David Cooke who is our IT Manager, to David Gibson our Webmaster, to Chris Howes and his team of Tratman Award judges and to Andi Smith and Adam Cooper for their work at the British Cave Science Centre.

Sub-committees
Thanks also to those who serve on BCRA Sub-committees with further information on their work on the website.

Library Steering Group
Jenny Potts (Chair of the LSG); Martin Laverty (IT, online bibliography/catalogue); John Gardner (IT, BCRA online archives); Chris Hunter (IT, Library webmaster, maintenance and update service); Mary Wilde – remunerated librarian (part time); Karen Slatcher – remunerated library assistant (part time).

CSTRF Awards Panel
Andrew Chamberlain (Chair); Andy Farrant; Rhian Kendall; Andrew McLeod; Graham Proudlove; Paul Wood.

Meetings held in 2025
Monthly zoom seminars:

- 13th Jan. Microbial Nitrogen Cycling and Cave Passage Modification in Mulu National Park. J. Max Koether, Department of Geology, University of Alabama.
- 10th Feb. Sulfuric Acid Speleogenesis: how can we recognize it and what can it teach us? Jo De Waele, Professor, Dept. of Biological, Geological, and Environmental Sci., University of Bologna.
- 10th Mar. The Underground Mistakes of My Career. Lessons learned from Maaras Cave, Greece. Christos Pennos, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Geology, Thessaloniki, Greece.
- 14th Apr. Palaeontological Perspectives on Caving in Thailand. Spyridoula Pappa, Senior Curator of Fossil Mammals, Natural History Museum.
- 12th May. Limestone, dirt and iron: using cave magnets to understand the past. Bethany Fox, Senior Lecturer, Dept. Biological and Geographical Sciences, Univ. of Huddersfield.
- 9th Jun. Expedition medicine: the art of applying science to cavers. Rostam Namaghi.
- 15th Sep. Forgotten Voices Speak: Recording historic graffiti in Kents Cavern, Torquay. Linda Wilson.
- 13th Oct. Cave Exploration, Guano, and Prehistory in Malaya and Borneo, 1870s-1960s. Katherine Enright, PhD student, Faculty of History and Museum of Zoology, Trinity College, Cambridge.
- 3rd Nov. Scientific Investigations in Greenland's Caves: Unlocking High Arctic Climate Histories. Gina Moseley, Assistant Professor, Institute of Geology, University of Innsbruck, Austria.
- 8th Dec. The Symonds Yat Cave System, Forest of Dean; initial scientific findings in the recent Redhouse Lane Swallet discoveries. Mark Tringham.

Hidden Earth
Hidden Earth started life as BCRA's annual caving conference and is now Britain's premier 'annual' event for cavers, sponsored by both BCRA and BCA. Both the 2024 and 2025 HE at Llangollen were well-attended & highly successful events. Many thanks to Les Williams & the HE team (and to Dave Shearsmith for manning the BCRA stall).

BCRA Awards
BCRA give three national awards, normally presented at Hidden Earth:

Arthur Butcher Award
Presented, broadly speaking, for "excellence in cave surveying". It was first awarded in 1988. It comprises a cash prize of £100 plus a trophy to keep for one year & is judged by a panel appointed by CSG. In 2025 the award was given to Becka Lawson "for decades of surveying, drawing up, and badgering people in many, many projects across the world. And particularly for training a lot of new people. More than one person we talked to described her as an inspiration, and some have gone on to be prolific surveyors themselves".

Tratman Award
Awarded annually for a caving-related paper-based publication in memory of E.K. Tratman, who died in 1978, to recognise excellence and encourage future improvement. The 2024 award was given to "Surrey's Ancient Stone Mines (2nd edn.)" by Peter Burgess. "Adventures Underground (2nd edn.) by Dave Haigh and John Cordingley received the accolade of being Highly Commended.

The Premier Trophy
BCRA's prize for cave photography, which was first awarded in 1975. It comprises a cash prize of £100 plus a trophy to keep for one year. In 2025 the Trophy was awarded to Bill Nix.

Meetings planned for 2026 and beyond
- No BCRA field meetings have been confirmed so far although some thought has been given to a field meeting in Devon and one at the BCSC. We would welcome offers to organise other field meetings.
- CAG, CSG and CREG may also be organising field meetings.
- Hidden Earth will take place in September 2026 and will again be at Llangollen.
- The next Cave Science meeting and BCRA AGM will be in October 2026.
- Thanks are due to the team who put together the British bid to host the 2029 ICS. Sadly, it was not successful and the event was awarded to Romania where it will be hosted by Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napolca.

BCRA Publications
- ***Cave and Karst Science***. Our primary publication is Cave and Karst Science which continues to appear three times per annum. As always, we invite those giving papers at this meeting to also submit to Cave and Karst Science. In an effort to encourage more BCRA members to contribute to the journal we now run at least one 'Photo Feature' in each issue. Please remember that posts on social media are ephemeral whereas a note in CaKS forms a permanent record.
- ***The CREG Journal***. The CREG Journal continues to be produced four times per annum with many articles of interest to cave scientists and technologists. A 1-year download subscription is only £4 – very good value!
- ***The BCRA Annual Review*** for 2025 is now available as a free download. The Review includes a copy of our annual "Report and Accounts" that was submitted to the Charity Commission. As always, Phil Wolstenholme, the Review Editor, has done a great job, but there is always a need for photographs with a science theme!
- ***Cave Studies Series and General Series Publications***. No publications thus far in 2025, but the CSS "Exploring the Limestone Landscapes of Arnside and Silverdale" is due later this year or early 2026.

We would love to have more publications, but we need people to write them!

CSTRF
- £45,000 was allocated up to the end of 2014, with a further £25,000 for the period 2015-2019. In 2019, Council allocated a further £25,000, extending the fund to the end of 2024, and in 2025 we agreed the same amount for a further five years.
- To date there have been 118 applications of which 95 were funded, the total amount awarded being over £100,000.
- So far in 2025 there have been 5 applications, and £5,445 has been awarded.
- A key concern is ensuring that grants result in reports published in BCRA journals!

Special Interest Groups
(see **bcra.org.uk/sig**)
- CREG publishes its own journal (as previously noted) and also organises occasional meetings, the first of which in 2025 is next weekend, 18 Oct, at Ingleton. See the BCRA website for further information.
- CSG has not held any field meetings so far in 2025 but operates several mailing lists & most activity in 2025 has been online discussion of the Survex survey drawing app. CSG has also been in discussion with BCRA's IT manager concerning the hosting of the UK's Cave Registry data on BCRA's new server. The Group meets informally at Hidden Earth where, this year, Wookey was re-affirmed as chairman and Andrew Atkinson as secretary.
- EUG. Almost dormant. Did not organise any meetings or events in 2024 or 2025, and its activity was limited to a small number of posts on its private mailing list. Attempts are being made to wake it up.
- CBG. Completely dormant with no activity over the past two years. Council would love to hear from anyone willing to start a species recovery programme.
- CAG. At the 2024 AGM I described them as being 'moribund' but Ric Peterson, assisted by Linda Wilson, has done a great job of reviving the archaeology group, including a new website and a meeting at Hidden Earth attended by 46 people.

The British Cave Science Centre
There is ongoing data collection and research, involving measuring rainfall, barometric pressure, temperature and drip rate. Sensors transmit data out of the cave in close to real time. Airflow, carbon dioxide concentration, radon concentration and the conductance, depth and temperature of the cave stream are monitored by stand-alone sensors.

UNESCO International Day of Caves and Karst (IDCK)
On 9th October the UNESCO Executive Board supported the IDCK proposal. Subject to a final proclamation in November at the UNESCO General Conference in Uzbekistan, we will start celebrating on 13 September 2026.

Chair's Summary and Thanks
A big 'thank-you' to all those who have contributed to the work of BCRA in 2025, in particular Katie Eavis, who provides excellent support for our *Just Go* membership system, and also for her work with the Library

There is a lot more that BCRA could do if we had the volunteers to help us. For example:
- How about volunteering to organise a field meeting?
- Or volunteering to organise an indoor event?
- We have ongoing need for assistance with publicity and with IT / web matters

A reminder that it isn't necessary for anyone to be a member of council in order to help BCRA, but if anyone is interested in serving on Council, please have a chat or email: **chair@bcra.org.uk.**

6. Council Report for 2024
The 2024 Council report to the Charity Commission had been published online at **bcra.org.uk/agm**. No points were raised for discussion.

7. Accounts for 2024
The Income and Expenditure Accounts and Balance Sheet for 2024 had been published online at **bcra.org.uk/agm**. No points were raised for discussion.

8. Motions received by the Secretary
No motions additional to those in the published agenda were received by the published deadline.

9. Announcement:
Nominations for Officers and Members of Council for 2026 was covered in the Chairman's Report.

10. Any Other Business
None notified.

11. Additional Documents comprising these Minutes
The minutes of the 2024 AGM, the Council Report and Accounts for 2024 are on the BCRA website at **bcra.org.uk/agm**.

12.Appendix – Attending Members (listed, see note below)
The list below (in no particular order) does not make any distinction between in-person or online attendance.

John Gunn, Dave Shearsmith, Andrew Farrant, Jo White, Russell Myers, Mike Rogerson, Jenny Potts, Simon Bottrell, Chloe Snowling, Graham Mullen, Andrew Chamberlain, Gina Moseley, Helen Goldie, Marie Chapman, Andrew McLeod, Emma Healey, Stephen Donovan, Johnathan Vetterien, David Richards, Luca Castrogovanni, Sebastian Breitenbach, Rick Peterson, Beth Fox, Rick Petersen Martin Laverty, Stephen Ewell Sutton, John S. Cooper, Matt Rowberry, Ian Wallace.

NOTE: Due to technical issues this list might not be complete.

Minutes written by Dave Shearsmith.