

## Report from Publications & Information Officer

At the June 2018 BCA AGM I was voted in as P&I Officer. Before the vote I explained the following:

- I believe the BCA needs to better promote itself as an organisation to the wider caving community. Ensure cavers know what it actually does and why BCA is relevant to them.
- In order to encourage more people to caving, the BCA should improve its promotion of our sport to a wider audience, not just within the caving community itself – we know caving's great.
- In order to help achieve the above, the BCA needs a 'PR/Marketing' role. My background is sales, marketing, PR and Social media I explained I would take on the role of P&I Officer with a view to defining the role as including PR and Marketing.

Thank you to all those present who voted for me.

Like it or not, the modern world is online. The way cavers (particularly younger ones) communicate, search and share information has changed and continues to do so at a rapid rate.



The BCA therefore needs (amongst other means of communication) a strong presence online, which includes a modern website and active social media pages.

The age demographic of cavers is old (see attached or link below). If new cavers aren't encouraged to our sport there will be little point in having £100,000's in the BCA coffers as in the coming years there won't be many active cavers to spend it on - Let's invest now for the future!

See Annex 4 P15 of June 2017 council minutes

[http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=about:documents:council\\_meetings:council\\_minutes\\_2017-06-11.pdf](http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=about:documents:council_meetings:council_minutes_2017-06-11.pdf)

### The Website

The current BCA website needs updating, particularly it's 'look', with a fresh design, inspiring photography, easy to navigate pages and an overhaul of the information contained within it.

There are two major aspects to the BCA web site, the appearance and the content.

I propose the website is redesigned though won't go into details here as would be far too complicated. A redesign would be an ideal opportunity to decide what outdated information could be removed and what new information needs to be added ensuring the BCA website is modern and relevant to today's caver.

For examples of website that inspire, inform and are easy to navigate:

<https://cncc.org.uk> and [www.newtocaving.com](http://www.newtocaving.com)

This is of course a huge undertaking and I believe should be outsourced to a professional website designer. It's too much to ask for this amount of work to be done quickly and for free by a volunteer. Cookie has done a huge amount of work on IT (and no doubt much else) for BCA and I'm sure everyone would join me in thanking him for these continued efforts. Is now not the time to help Cookie with this large workload?

I propose we ask a professional website designer to quote for designing a new BCA website and set aside a budget of £5K so we can make a start. From experience I know website design can cost many £1000's and take months to complete – I expect the finished website to cost more than £5K however believe a start should be made as soon as possible.

As part of the redesign, BCA could do with a new logo – the current one has been around for decades and it's time for a new modern image ☺

#### **A leaflet for beginners – an excellent way for BCA to reach out to potential new cavers**

A redesign of the 'So you want to go caving' leaflet if required. This leaflet could be printed by the 1000's and given free to show caves, relevant tourist centres, climbing walls, student clubs for freshers weeks, Scout Groups etc to help inspire new people to our sport. As the BCA has already adopted [www.newtocaving.com](http://www.newtocaving.com), basing the leaflet on this website makes sense. Efforts have already been made to place NTC posters in suitable locations – more help doing this would be appreciated - <https://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?topic=23740.0>



*A typical caving club stand at a Freshers Fair – I missed the opportunity to try and get posters to the student clubs, though they were given out at CHECC last year. Leaflets would be useful on these stands and maybe BCA could provide more help? These clubs bring many new cavers to the sport so should be supported. Could Y&D help with this?*

Before finalising the leaflet design the new BCA logo would be required. Dan at Tor Studios who designed the NTC website could design a logo and leaflet for approval. I would like to get this process started and propose a budget of £1000 for logo/leaflet design and an initial print run once the design has been approved.

Alternatively, we could ask the wider caving community to design a logo – maybe a competition over social media for ideas?

### **The BCA Newsletter.**

Sign up to this excellent source of information needs to improve – currently only 8% of members have signed up to receive the newsletter!

Could copies not be printed and sent out to clubs etc as with the excellent CNCC newsletter? The world may be online, however there is still a place for a newsletter being read with a brew in the clubhouse common room – an excellent way for the BCA to promote its work to cavers.

I am happy to conduct an 'online campaign' to encourage sign up.

I support the suggestions made by the CNCC regarding newsletter funding. Associations need to interact with their memberships and newsletters are an excellent way of doing this.

### **Media Liaison**

I would like to be copied into the e-mails/telephone contacts received by the Media Liaison Officer so I can spot any potential opportunities for positive PR for caving. Also, should another 'Thai Rescue' event occur, it's too much work for one person to contend with as the world's media comes knocking.

### **BCA Publications, Advice Notices and Information**

Some of the notices listed on the current BCA website are outdated – I propose I go through them and suggest what could be removed/archived/updated.

Of the current and relevant publications – Minimum Impact Guidelines, Weil's disease information for example – what is being done with this other than being on the website? Are new notices required – safeguarding advice for 18's etc for example?

### **P&I Standing Committee**

The P&I is a standing Committee though as I understand it hasn't met for a considerable time? Who would like to be a part of this committee as I would like to establish a group to help with the above work?

### **Ukcaving.com – conflict of interest or an opportunity.**

Yes I own and run ukcaving.com with my husband, Tim Allen. The forum and its associated facebook/twitter pages reach many 1000's of cavers every week. It's run on a not for profit basis with all advertising revenue used to either pay for IT support and hosting or invested back into caving. For example UKC supports Summer expeditions with rope sponsorship and the CHECC 'Grand Prize'. It also provides a valuable resource for cavers with over 14 years of searchable information available.

We bought the forum 5 years ago as it had a poor reputation and needed improving. After much work the forum is now a more positive place.

UKC is a media platform, just like facebook is or Descent and has dedicated pages for BCA/BCRA/Hidden Earth which are free to use. 1000's of cavers can be reached simply by posting. I propose members of BCA committees use the dedicated boards on the forum to help promote BCA and it's work to cavers.

I understand some believe BCA should run UKC, however I know from experience the amount of time and effort it takes to run such an active forum. Does BCA currently have the spare volunteer capacity to run UKC? Why not make use of the volunteer hours already being put in by the team at UKC?

## Facebook

I am now an admin on the BCA facebook page however would like guidance on how much BCA would like me to post – I could do much more. I'm already running the UKC page so to add BCA wouldn't be much extra effort.

A thought – facebook is a social media platform as is UKC. Why would BCA support facebook but not UKC? One is owned by billionaires, run for profit and cares not one jot about cavers, caving or caves the other is the polar opposite ☺ - use both.

## Descent and other advertising

I am told BCA have been spending a not insignificant amount on advertising with Descent. Descent is an important caving publication and I see no reason why BCA shouldn't continue to advertise in the magazine however I propose advert content and budget spend should be reviewed and organised by the P&I committee going forward as should all advertising.

What message do BCA want to put across? Who do they want to reach? How will they do this – Descent, facebook, UKC, newsletters, Hidden Earth, other? Cavers will use all or some of the channels listed, BCA should engage with them all.

£3K is in the draft 2019 budget for advertising. I propose this is increased to £4K but comes within the £10K P&I budget.



What about sponsoring the 'Underground Session' at Kendal Mountain Festival in 2019 and help to promote New to Caving, a website dedicated to encouraging new people to our sport? An ideal opportunity to reach an 'adventurous' audience.

## **Hidden Earth – what is its relation to BCA?**

The annual caving conference is one of the most important events in the caving calendar. A chance for cavers from all over the country to meet up and an ideal opportunity for BCA to promote itself and its work to cavers hence why I mention it here.

I believe it's unclear to many cavers what the connection is between BCA and Hidden Earth. If HE is ultimately run/funded by BCA (through BCRA) consider renaming HE to include BCA in the title.

Could BCA not help Hidden Earth out with its struggle to find a decent venue, particularly one up North by offering funding? If suitable locations are being dismissed partly due to cost, couldn't BCA offer to help pay towards a better venue?

BCA should have a stand at Hidden Earth, reach out to cavers, ask their opinions, share information, promote the organisation's work. An interesting and engaging stand worth visiting would be ideal.

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My apologies if the above report asks more questions than it answers, however I have to start somewhere. I'm hoping following positive discussion at the council meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> October and with support from my fellow council members we can begin the process of better promoting BCA to the cavers of today and of promoting caving to the new cavers of tomorrow.