

DCA PROPOSALS TO BCA AGM, 12 MARCH 2005

Clarification of the status of "Club Individual Members"

1. Introduction

1.1 At the NCA SGM on 1st. Nov. 2003 which agreed the BCA Constitution, the status of "Club Members" of BCA was clearly defined in section 5.1.b) and the way in which a Club may become a Group Member of BCA was set out in section 5.3. Similarly the status of "Direct Individual Members" (DIMs) was clearly defined in section 5.1.a) and the way in which an individual may become a DIM was set out in section 5.2. Both Club Members and DIMs are clearly identified as "Full Members", i.e. they have voting rights, will automatically receive BCA publications and will receive other benefits.

1.2 At the end of a lengthy meeting, having already agreed the details of the Constitution, the Minutes then record under item 5.01 (which relates to subscription levels for 2004) the following:
"The original paper indicated that fees, excluding the cost of insurance, in the order of £10 for individual, £15 for clubs and £20 for associates would be needed to cover costs but subsequent discussion appeared to envisage a reduced fee for individuals who joined via a club and did not receive all publications etc. This approach was countered by the need to keep all individual members informed. Figures as low as between £3 and £5 for individuals joining via a club were mentioned."

No attempt was made to incorporate this type of membership into the Constitution but these were christened "Club Individual Members" (CIMs) to distinguish them from DIMs.

1.3 In Constitution section 9.1 (Procedure for Postal Ballots) it states:

"The postal ballot shall be issued to all members entitled to vote."

During discussion at the SGM it was accepted that, whilst membership cards for CIMs would be sent in a block to their club for distribution, ballot papers must be posted direct to each individual - implying that BCA would keep records which would identify every CIM.

1.4 Following the SGM a Ballot paper was sent to all existing Club Members of NCA asking the club to indicate its approval of the Draft Constitution of the British Caving Association as amended by the NCA SGM. In the *"Explanatory Note"* on the ballot paper, written by the NCA Chairman, the following statement was made:

"During the debate, a separate entry route for individuals was accepted: namely as a block entry organised by a club. Although no sum had been identified for such a group, it is thought likely that the subscription rate for individuals who join as a group through their club could be less than £5, excluding the cost of insurance."

The ballot received 94% approval, thus the BCA Constitution as agreed at the SGM was accepted.

1.5 In May 2004 an official **"BCA Handbook Update"** was issued, dated 22 April 2004, which clarified the arrangements for different categories of membership. In the section headed **"B. Club Individual Membership"** it states:

"Club Individual Membership is provided for persons who are members of clubs which have joined BCA as Group Members (see below) and who wish to participate in the BCA PL insurance scheme or have a say in the running of BCA by having a vote.

"Three sub-categories of membership are provided: Caving Insured, Non caving Insured and Uninsured. ... Uninsured Club Individual Members are those whose club has chosen not to join the BCA PL scheme, for example because they have adequate arrangements of their own (e.g. university clubs)."

This Update lists BCA subscriptions for 2004 under the headings:

<i>Club</i>	<i>Caving</i>	<i>£18.00</i>
<i>Individual</i>	<i>Non caving</i>	<i>£ 6.00</i>
<i>Membership</i>	<i>Uninsured</i>	<i>£ 2.00</i>

2. Differing Understandings of the status of "Club Individual Members" (CIMs)

2.1 It seems to have been accepted without question that if a club took out block insurance for all its members through BCA and thus provided a list of these members and paid an administrative fee for each individual as part of the charge for insurance, these individual members of the member club became, de facto, CIMs. These individuals would receive a BCA membership card, would be eligible to vote and would receive certain other benefits.

2.2 Some organisations, DCA and its member clubs among them, from the material quoted in section 1 above, understood the CIM status to mean that any BCA member club which did not insure its members through BCA could, if it wished, take out a block registration for all its members as CIMs by providing a list of club members to BCA and paying a small administrative fee for each member so registered. Since all clubs during 2004 joined NCA and not BCA (though many clubs bought their insurance through BCA) it was assumed this was the reason that these provisions for registering CIMs were never invoked. However it was assumed that this system would come into operation in 2005.

3. The perceived problem

- 3.1 During the course of setting club and individual subscriptions for 2005 it has somehow become incorporated into the calculations that **only** the individual members of those clubs which insure through BCA have the right to be called CIMs. These will have their membership cards, voting rights, etc. The CIM subscription for 2005 has been set as zero.
- 3.2 Clubs which have not taken out BCA PL insurance are now in the position that there is no route for their members to become CIMs. Their members are disenfranchised - they cannot have BCA membership cards or have a vote. This is causing concern and resentment among the clubs affected, particularly those who already have other adequate insurance arrangements.
- 3.3 Because **only** those clubs which have taken out BCA insurance are paying the administrative fee necessary to allow for the provision of record keeping, membership cards and possible ballot posting, and the CIM subscription for 2005 has been set at zero, the whole of the administrative cost of dealing with CIMs falls on those who have taken out BCA insurance - currently less than 50% of BCA member clubs.

4. DCA Proposals

DCA seeks to clarify the position in time for 2006 and to define the status of Club Individual Members in consultation with the BCA membership as a whole rather than seeking an "interpretation" by BCA Executive or BCA Council.

DCA further considers it important to raise the profile of BCA by maximising the number of individuals linked to BCA, either as Direct Individual Members or as Club Individual Members.

To this end DCA wishes to make the following 3 proposals to the BCA AGM of 12 March 2005:

1. **That Club Individual Membership of BCA be defined as individual members of member clubs whose club has either:**
 - a) **Taken out PL insurance via BCA and has paid an administrative fee for each member as part of their insurance charge;**
 - or**
 - b) **Whilst not taking out PL insurance via BCA, has registered its members as wishing to have a say in the running of BCA by having a vote and has paid an administrative fee for each member via the club.**

In either case, the whole membership of the club must be covered as a block registration and the administrative fee should be sufficient to cover the necessary record keeping, the issue of CIM membership cards, the provision of a postal ballot and any other benefits defined as applicable to CIMs.

2. **That consideration be given to appropriate section(s) being added to the BCA Constitution to cover Club Individual Member status. If such addition(s) be deemed necessary, steps be taken to amend the Constitution in time for the change(s) to take effect from 1st. January 2006.**
3. **That, regardless of discussion and agreement on the proposals above, the existing arrangements already agreed for BCA member subscriptions and insurance for 2005 should stand until 31 December 2005.**

**Jenny Potts
DCA Hon. Secretary
On behalf of Derbyshire Caving Association**