

British Cave Rescue Council

Charity registration number: 1137252



Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

1 February 2019 to 31 January 2020



Photo by G Thomas

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) are to relieve suffering and distress amongst persons and animals endangered by accidents or natural hazards, by co-ordinating and providing support for member underground search and rescue organisations in the British Isles, with the support and recognition of police, fire and all other relevant authorities.

The BCRC is the co-ordinating body for 15 cave rescue member teams operating in the UK and Ireland. It represents and supports its members at national and international level and promotes cave rescue and the exchange of information between member rescue organisations, providing a common voice.

We bring teams together to share training and best practice, co-ordinate grant claims and administer the national 'peer-review' process. We help teams to maintain the core capabilities required of a BCRC member team in order to meet the operational needs required by the calling authorities (Police, Fire & Rescue services) and the general public.

The benefit to the public of a wholly voluntary search and rescue service is that we and our member teams are able to provide trained and equipped personnel to respond to a call out, any day or time of the year. These teams are able to operate underground and in other inhospitable locations to help save lives. The trustees continue to have regard to the Charity Commission guidance on 'Public Benefit', which informs what we do and how we do it.

Officers of the council represent member teams' interests at external meetings, events and conferences. Cave rescue is represented at the United Kingdom Search and Rescue (UKSAR) forum. We liaise with the National Police Chiefs Council, the Police Search Advisors (PoSA) training college, the British Caving Association, the Cave Diving Group and the British Cave Research Association. We maintain a close relationship with Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and with other European cave rescue teams through our European Cave Rescue Association (ECRA) membership.

The BCRC also works on national equipment procurement deals for its member teams. This year we have been in a position to fund equipment, dry tubes for the divers and extra gas monitors to help to ensure the safety of teams underground. We were also able to pay out claims for expenses totalling £5,218 incurred during the rescue in Thailand. A further £8,024 has been allocated to support teams' equipment purchases during 2020 and for further upgrades to the NICOLA (surface to underground communication system).

Policy on Grant Making

The BCRC is not normally in a position to make grants. However, matched funding grants of up to £500 per team to support large purchases of rescue equipment have been agreed, made possible by the generous donations made during and since the rescue in Thailand in 2018.

Volunteers

The BCRC is administered by 12 volunteer officers with support from additional co-opted volunteer support officers. The year ended 31 January 2020 has been another relatively busy year for BCRC officers and team members who have stepped up to support teams nationally. We are extremely grateful to a team member from the Derbyshire team, who spent time successfully negotiating a free gas monitor for each of the teams.

It should be noted that the bulk of physical cave rescue work is undertaken by our member teams, and the volunteers that operate in those teams. The 15 teams across the British Isles are made up of approximately 1,000 volunteer rescuers. All team officers and team members are volunteers making cave rescue in the UK a service entirely run by volunteers.

During the incident reporting year ended December 2019, the teams and their members responded to 44 call outs and 4,195 man-hours (2018 - 31 call outs, 2,665 man-hours) were put in to these searches, rescues and call outs. Many more hours are spent on equipment cleaning and maintenance, training, fundraising and administering the organisations. All BCRC officers are active members of their local cave rescue teams.

BCRC officers and team members also represent cave rescue interests and provide volunteer support within MREW in areas such as fundraising, communications, medical, equipment checking, training and spreading the 'AdventureSmart' message to support the mountain rescue teams.

Achievements and Performance

Four 'Libor' training grants were obtained, totalling £12k. Two for member teams, one for centrally managed medical training equipment and one for the biennial cave rescue training conference. The medical equipment grant also provided a full-sized training manikin for the cave divers.

During a very successful 2019 BCRC conference hosted by Mendip Cave Rescue in September, 75+ cave rescuers attended a variety of lectures and practical training sessions. The sessions with the divers proved very popular. The visiting public at Wookey Hole had the added attraction of seeing various cave rescue scenarios in progress, whilst we used their excellent facilities.

One team was peer reviewed and teams are being encouraged to work together to provide the manpower and share the learning experience. The BCRC display assets were improved, as more organisations become aware of cave rescue and request our presence at events.

Many hours have been spent on governance. Policies and procedures have been improved and our constitution is being updated for the 21st century. We have also moved to an online management platform.

BCRC officers have been supporting the improvement of cave rescue equipment such as underground stretchers and the bags that we use to keep casualties warm (CasBags) and many hours have been spent negotiating with MREW, sharing information and supporting our membership through the changes to MREW membership and insurance issues.

BCRC officers attend many meetings and conferences, to raise the profile of cave rescue and to contribute to the national and international discussion and planning of search and rescue (SAR) services. During the year, this included UKSAR and MREW meetings, the Emergency Services Show (ESS), The National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) conference, the national caving conference, a PolSA training day, a ceremony for the cave divers receiving medals and the ECRA conference and online meetings. We also hold an annual training and information sharing weekend which ties in with the AGM. Officers, team members, cavers and divers continued to give presentations on the Thai rescue throughout the year.

Our co-opted support officers maintain the national website and facebook page and the incidents reporting. In addition, officers, using their own funds, continue to contribute to the development of cave rescue teams overseas.

Fundraising Performance

Our Fundraising objectives are to cover the expected annual core running costs of the BCRC, in the region of £5k a year, so that we can fulfil our objects without impinging on public funds that might otherwise be directly donated to our member teams.

We have also continued to support MREW's national and team fundraising.

Financial Review

2019/2020 was another very good year for BCRC due to the rescue in Thailand in 2018. We received £27,936 (2019 - £57,002) including restricted income and grants and spent £24,542 (2019 £6,082) leaving us a £3,394 surplus. Rather amazing for a small charity which usually receives and spends up to £5,000 on a good year.

Reserves

Following on from last year's policy review, we hold an increased risks reserve to cover one year's operating costs, unexpected large rescue costs and to support teams after a catastrophic event or loss of support.

We have also allocated more funds to the team equipment reserve, to cover our 2020 spending plans and it stands at £11,150.

Principal Sources of Funds

The principal source of regular income is normally the annual subscription levied on our fifteen member teams, this is £100 per member team.

Grants are occasionally available for BCRC and teams, although these are not guaranteed. Currently, the UKSAR 'Liber' fund administered by CAF is a temporary source of grant funding for training, both centrally and for member teams but it is coming to an end.

In addition BCRC receives donations from individuals, trusts and companies and ad hoc support from caving, diving and rescue organisations and events. In 2019/2020 donations were still buoyed up by donations due to the 2018 rescue in Thailand.

Risks and Uncertainties

One of the main risks facing the BCRC is ongoing funding. As a co-ordinating body, the BCRC is not as attractive to donors as the cave rescue teams themselves. As a National body, it does not attract local support. In line with many charities, a year's running costs are included in the core Reserve Policy, this allows a little time to find extra funding or cut services and spending should donations or other sources contract. Teams provide the main funding and without outside sources, teams would decide and fund the level of activity required from BCRC.

Reliance on busy volunteers and the time that they can contribute is also a challenge, particularly as most volunteers also work and are active within cave rescue teams.

For many years, the BCRC and its member teams have been full members of Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW), a much larger charity, which has provided support and funded some of the ongoing costs of its member teams. These include fundamental services such as medical insurance, the licence to administer prescription and controlled drugs, the radio licence, public liability insurance, top-up accident insurance and vehicle insurance.

MREW has moved its governance to a new charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). There will be three classes of membership. The BCRC and some cave teams will no longer be eligible to be full members but will be able to apply to be 'associate members'. The effect of loss of full membership over time is unknown.

Structure, Governance and Management

The BCRC is an unincorporated charity, governed by its constitution and charity law. It was originally formed as the Cave Rescue Council in 1967 and was reconstituted as the British Cave Rescue Council in 1981. It became a registered charity in April 2003 and the constitution was last updated in 2008. The constitution has now been reviewed and proposed changes circulated. However, Covid 19 has delayed discussion with members and the vote for its adoption.

Trustee selection

The members at the annual general meeting (AGM) elect the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer. They can also elect extra officers as President, Vice Chairman, Training Officer, Equipment Officer, Conference Secretary, Communications Officer, Medical Advisor, Diving Advisor and Legal Advisor, if they wish.

The Executive Committee can co-opt members as the extra officers if the positions remain vacant at the end of the AGM. The Executive Committee may in addition appoint not more than 3 further co-opted members to the limit of one third co-opted members on the committee.

The wider network

The BCRC is a full member of the Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) charity and is applying to be an associate member of the new MREW CIO. BCRC is affiliated to UK Search & Rescue (UKSAR). Internationally the BCRC is a member of the European Cave Rescue Association (ECRA).

Administrative details

British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC)

Registered charity number: 1137252

Old Forge House
Hampton Loade
Bridgnorth
WV15 6HD

Email: secretary@caverescue.org.uk
Website: www.caverescue.org.uk

The charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustees
1	Peter Dennis	Chair		Members at the AGM
2	Emma Porter	Secretary		Members at the AGM
3	Heather Simpson	Treasurer		Members at the AGM
4	Richard Whitehouse	Vice Chair		Members at the AGM /Executive committee
5	Gary Mitchell	Assistant Chair		Members at the AGM/Executive committee
6	James Davis	Training Officer		Members at the AGM/Executive committee
7	Michael Clayton	Equipment Officer		Members at the AGM/Executive committee
8	Toby Hamnett	Legal Advisor		Members at the AGM/Executive committee
9	Brendan Sloan	Medical officer		Members at the AGM/Executive committee
10	Christopher Jewel	Diving Officer		Members at the AGM/Executive committee
11	Anthony Haigh	Communications Officer		Members at the AGM/Executive committee
12	Roger King	Information Officer		Members at the AGM/Executive committee



Receipts and payments accounts - final

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01/02/2019		31/01/2020

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Levies	1,400	-	-	1,400	1,840
Thai rescue expenses reclaimed	6,270	-	-	6,270	-
Donations	3,595	3,810	-	7,405	52,776
Gift-Aid	398	-	-	398	2,331
VAT reclaimed	293	-	-	293	-
Grants	4,895	7,269	-	12,164	-
Conference loan returned	-	-	-	-	-
Hidden Earth	-	-	-	-	45
Interest received	2	-	-	2	-
Badge sales	5	-	-	5	10
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	16,856	11,079	-	27,936	57,002
A2 Asset and investment sales					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	16,856	11,079	-	27,936	57,002
A3 Payments					
Travel	2,204	-	-	2,204	2,609
Rescue costs	5,218	-	-	5,218	622
Training		7,255	-	7,255	232
Team training grants	4,895	-	-	4,895	-
Unspent grant returned		14	-	14	-
Equipment for teams	783	3,584	-	4,367	
Equipment development		-	-	-	100
Fundraising costs	42	-	-	42	873
Conference loan		-	-	-	-
AGM	150	-	-	150	101
Uniforms		-	-	-	599
Printing, postage & stationery	162	-	-	162	22
Donations	100	-	-	100	100
Subscriptions	135	-	-	135	471
Sub total	13,688	10,854	-	24,542	5,729
A4 Asset and investment purchases.					
Exhibition stands x 3		-	-	-	353
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	353
Total payments	13,688	10,854	-	24,542	6,082
Net of receipts/(payments)	3,168	226	-	3,394	50,920
A5 Transfers between funds	- 8,024	8,024	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	63,077	2,900	-	65,977	15,057
Cash funds this year end	58,221	11,150	-	69,371	65,977

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Lloyds current account	2,375		-
	Lloyds savings account	53,852	11,150	-
	Paypal account	1,995	-	-
	Total cash funds	58,221	11,150	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted to nearest £	Restricted to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £
	Levy debtors	200	-	-
	Reclaimable VAT	200	-	-
	ECRA fees prepaid for 2020	574	-	-
			-	-
		-	-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	Four exhibition stands	unrestricted	-	-
	40 Cloth badges	unrestricted		
	6 glass coasters	unrestricted		
	90 pin badges	unrestricted	-	-
		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	None		-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name		Date of approval
		Dr Peter Dennis		
		Heather Simpson (FCCA)		



Section A Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

**On accounts for the year
ended** **Charity no
(if any)**

Set out on pages
(tick or enter 10 to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/01/2020**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report** As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed: **Date:**

Name:

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

