



treasurer@british-caving.org.uk  
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Dear BCA member,

As BCA Treasurer, I would like to explain why it will be necessary to increase membership fees for 2026. To put it in context, I'll first summarise what the BCA does for British caving, and why it needs money. BCA membership is sometimes seen as just an addition to club membership fees for 'insurance', but there's actually a lot more to BCA than insurance.

BCA was set up as an overall national body to collect membership fees on behalf of all its constituent bodies, disburse funds out to them and negotiate a much cheaper 'bulk buy' insurance policy. Much of what it pays for doesn't have BCA on the label.

Your membership fees fund all the Regional Caving Councils, who in turn fund access and conservation, stabilising and improving entrances, training for cavers, and fixed equipment such as anchors and ladders. BCA makes a contribution to the costs of the British Caving Library and the Ghar Parau Foundation, which assists caving expeditions. BCA's Youth and Development team works with student groups and others to ensure that there are young cavers coming into the sport. Qualifications for professional caving instructors are managed by BCA but are self funding.

For clubs and non-caving members, the main benefit is insurance, at a cost much lower than obtainable directly. The insurers insist that, for a club to be insured, all members including non-cavers must be BCA members.

Ten years ago, BCA had spare money in the bank and decided this would be better spent on improvements for cavers. Membership fees were reduced, so have been artificially low, and should really have been raised several years ago. The spare reserves have been spent, income is less than expenditure and nothing can be cut without reducing what we do for cavers. Over half our income is spent on insurance. Internal costs are mostly for IT and part-time staff, as everything else is done by volunteers. The tight budget I had to apply for 2025 is squeezing the funding for Regional Councils.

We have initiatives to make BCA more effective and more efficient but can't do that without funds. To put our fees into context, the individual member rate for 2026 will be £32, the same as when BCA was founded 21 years ago. Compared to our sister organisations, £32 is low. Renewal of adult membership of Paddle UK is now £49 and for BMC it's £53.

If you'd like more detail, the proposal that was approved by the July meeting of BCA Council can be read [here](#). I will be at Hidden Earth and happy to talk further.

Your support keeps caving funded, helping staff and volunteers to do the necessary work to sustain our sport and move the organisation forward.

Yours in caving

Chris Bolton  
Treasurer