

The National Caving Association

Minutes of the Equipment and Techniques Committee

Date: 5th August 2000
Location: Stafford Social Club
Attendees: Les Sykes, Glenn Jones, Jenny Potts, Owen Clarke, Mark Lowe
Apologies: Paul Edmunds, Les Williams, Chips Rafferty, Adrian Fawcett

1.0 *Agree minutes of previous meeting*

The minutes of the August 5th 2000 meeting were agreed apart from amending section 2.4. The second sentence of this section now reads: *Persons inspecting anchors must be a currently registered installer.*

2.0 *Update on NCA ARP insurance*

As per the minutes of the previous NCA meeting (June 24th 2000), persons participating in the NCA Anchor Replacement Programme are covered by the NCA insurance scheme.

3.0 *Role of NCA Equipment Committee Convenor*

GJ opened a discussion on the role of the EC Convenor in order that there would be no misunderstanding as to his role. The meeting (and GJ) agreed that he would manage the following:

- arrange dates and locations for meetings
- record and circulate minutes of meetings
- respond to equipment related queries addressed to association
- report to Nat. Council on equipment related matters
- maintain budget for committee and authorise purchases – *not started*
- co-ordinate anchor replacement programme, particularly with respect to training and documentation
- circulate safety related warning notices where safety issues brought to Association's attention *via Speleoscene, NCA web site, Regional Councils and caving press*
- keep track of Associations stock of equipment related to Eq. Ctte activities (drills, rope test rig) – *not started – no idea who has what currently!*
- co-ordinate policy with regard to anchor placement and fixed aids
- Council will also raise items for Equipment Committee to consider; an information relay function you are expected to perform
- have regard to Association's liability in respect of advice offered (esp. rope testing, placement of anchors, selection of equipment).

GJ explained that he would not have the time to (and therefore will not be) undertaking the following, which were previously managed by Nick Williams. It was thought that these should remain with Nick, unless he had any strong objections:

- ensure NCA representation at BSI standards development meetings
- liaison with other bodies (esp. BMC) regarding technical matters

Finally, the issue of the maintenance of NCA equipment will be the responsibility of the current user of that equipment.

Actions

No	Action	Owner	Action Date	Status
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3.1.1	Chase BM for current list of EC assets and who holds them	GJ	By next meeting	
3.1.2	Chase BM re EC budget	GJ	By next meeting	

4.0 Anchor Replacement Programme

There were no regional reports presented.

- LS stated a budget proposal had been presented to BM
- It was queried whether a representative from the Forest of Dean should be invited to attend EC meetings. GJ was actioned to copy minutes to Dave Appling. Update: A recent article in the caving press implies that FoD cavers need presentation on the NCA ARP.
- ML queried whether we need to update ARP policy re updated HSE specifications i.e., anchors for rope access work are now being inspected every 6 months. ML was asked to distribute latest specifications.
- It was agreed that a programme of comparative tests should be created to demonstrate the relationship between ECO anchors and all other fixed anchors likely to be used in caving. LS was asked to produce a costed proposal for the next meeting.

Actions

No	Action	Owner	Action Date	Status
4.1.1	Copy Dave Appling with minutes of this meeting	GJ	By next meeting	
4.1.2	Distribute latest rope access specifications	ML	By next meeting	
4.1.3	Produce a costed proposal for a programme of comparative tests should be created to demonstrate the relationship between ECO anchors and all other fixed anchors likely to be used in caving.	GMJ	By next meeting	

5.0 Fixed Aids Policy

Current document history:

Draft 1 (based on DCA Draft 4 and discussions at the Equipment Committee Meeting of 13 June 1998).

Draft 2 agreed at the Equipment Committee meeting of 13 February 1999

Draft 3 agreed at the Equipment and Techniques Committee Meeting of August 5th 2000.

Draft 4 (BM draft) for discussion at next EC meeting

A general discussion took place to understand if a Fixed Aids Policy was required. The meeting agreed that a policy was required. The meeting then reviewed the current draft (dated 21st June) and a number of amendments were identified which GJ agreed to manage and issue as draft 3. **UPDATE: BM has subsequently provided further input and draft 4 will be reviewed at the next meeting.** It was also agreed that there should be guidelines for specific types of fixed aids e.g., ladders, chains etc., in much the same way as there is the ARP policy. OC was asked to draft the guidelines for ladders which would include the provision for lifelines.

Actions

No	Action	Owner	Action Date	Status
5.1.1	Amend draft 3 as per meeting agreement	GJ	End Sept 2000	

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5.1.2	Produce draft guidelines for ladders (to include provision for lifelines)	OC	By next meeting	
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6.0 Long Term Rope Test

The current (draft) documents for the long term rope test programme were discussed amended and a final version agreed including recall usage figures of: 200, 350, 500, 650, 800, 950 and 1100 usages.

It was agreed that GJ would prepare the rope lengths, labelling and documentation in order to distribute the ropes at Hidden Earth in September. OC agreed to prepare a statement for Speleoscene in order to request volunteer clubs to take part in the programme.