



Minutes for Anchor Working Group Meeting

1st December 2025 at 8pm

Held via Zoom

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1.0 Apologies for Absence

Andrew Atkinson

2.0 Persons Present

	RCC / Org / Role	Name	Initials	Present?
AWG Convenor		Pete Knight	PK	y
Regional Anchor Coordinators	CNCC	Ian Walker	IW	y
	CSCC	Andrew Atkinson	AA	
	CW / OC	Vince Allkins	VA	y
	DCA	Josie Skirrow	JS	y
	DCUC	Richard Vooght	RV	
Other AWG Members	NAMHO	Steve Holding	SH	
		Bob Mehew	BM	y
		Mark Richards	MR	y
		Ian Patrick	IP	y
	BCA	Chris Bolton	CJB	y
Other Attendees	BCA	Aidan Kuhlmann	AK	y

Minutes compiled by Katie Eavis (not present at the meeting) from the Zoom recording.

3.0 Current Composition of the Working Group

See above.

4.0 Acceptance of Previous Meeting's Minutes

Draft minutes are circulated to members of the AWG for comment as soon as is practicable after the meeting has ended. After a two-week period for corrections or clarifications, the minutes will be published on the BCA website.

PK asks if members of the AWG are happy with the new plan for approval of meeting minutes. This involves circulating them by email as soon as possible after the meeting, with a 2 week window to reply with changes/ issues. If nothing major is raised the minutes can then be published as approved. Anything contentious can be referred to next meeting, and the approval of the minutes delayed until then. No objections raised at the meeting.

PK states the method of approving minutes can always be revisited in the future if needed.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Previous Working Group Meeting

Most matter arising already appear further down the agenda for today's meeting.

PK asks if there is an update on CJB talking to Simon at BCA IT about storage space, and if BM has an update on finding lost documents.

CJB found some lost documents and has passed them on to BM.

PK will have a look through documentation DCA holds.

6.0 BCA Anchor Defect/Failure Reports

Please share any reports you have received relating to defective BCA anchors within your region.

There is a statement within the BCA anchor policy stating all regions are required to report their anchor failures to the BCA, which now means this working group. PK proposes having a standing agenda item for these so they can be shared and minuted centrally.

At this point there is some discussion about what information should be recorded, what constitutes a failure in an anchor and whether there should be defined categories of failure. MR points out the importance of ensuring all regions are working off the same categories when reporting back, and also the importance of distinguishing between reports by cavers, and reports by installers.

There is also discussion about whether any rotational movement of anchors is acceptable.

PK states the metal of the anchors can flex/ rotate slightly under body weight loads, but physical rotation of the anchor within the resin, or of the resin within rock indicates a faulty bond and in a professional setting is a fail.

After some discussion the suggestions for reporting to this meeting are:

The regional anchor co-ordinator (or equipment officer) collates faulty anchor reports to the regional council, and decides on which reports are worth reporting to the AWG. They should usually investigate/ inspect first to ensure there is actually a problem with the anchor, rather than just relying on cavers reports.

If possible they should include: date of report, location, the anchor type, resin type, roughly when the anchor was installed, the reason for the failure, including observations and any measurements. (e.g. wear on the eye, loose resin etc)

This could lead to a conclusion on whether the reported anchor was safe, or unsafe and a report as to whether it will be replaced.

These can be collated on a google drive, and potentially raised and discussed at the AWG meetings.

IW suggests some guidance from the AWG for installers and assessors on what constitutes a failure and movement in an anchor would be good. IW also suggests it would be a good idea to pull test a number of wobbly anchors to form data as to how safe/ unsafe wobbly anchors are.

AK states the need for clearly defined data set to be collected to aid analysis.

There is discussion about the pros and cons of pull testing wobbly anchors.

PK summarises the group need to make a framework for reporting loose anchors, and also some guidance for installers on how to inspect reported anchors. PK will collate this. Please email him with current methods and suggestions for the future.

7.0 Anticipated BCA Claims from RCCs (in the Next 6 Months)

To help the BCA Treasurer plan for expenditure, the AWG should consider what it expects to spend in 2026. This does not include regional claims for bolting expenses.

Estimate currently set at 100% £200, 50% £200, 10% £1000.

CJB clarifies what information he would like from the AWG. He would like to know what the working group would like to spend, e.g. on testing anchors, which may include a region conducting testing on behalf of this BCA working group. He states regions already send him estimates of their spends on bolting so he does not need that via the AWG.

IP asks if courses, such as the Lyon course PK has just completed, could be useful for installers? PK says this course is very much aimed at professionals involved in working at height and BCA could do something better and more relevant to installers in house.

8.0 Items for Discussion

8.1 Terms of Reference – Do we also include staples, ladders & other fixed aids?

AK states the terms of reference were written as they are to form a clear divide between the remit of the anchor WG and the training and equipment WG. Anything bolted to the cave is considered with the AWG's remit. Anything cavers bring to the cave, or can take away, is under training and equipment's remit.

There is some discussion about whether these are best left for the regions to

deal with, or whether there is an argument for having a central knowledge base within BCA. The feeling is the Anchor WG currently have enough in their area with just anchors, and things permanently attached to anchors such as pull through chains.

MR says the AWG needs to be careful it isn't making decisions on behalf of regions. CJB adds BCA doesn't need to have a central position on whether staples etc are included.

This can always be changed in the future if there is demand to include more fixed aids in caves, such as staples.

8.2 Suggestions for other standing agenda items for the AWG

No items raised at this time.

CJB suggests letting it run, and if a topic keeps reoccurring it could then be added as a standing topic.

8.3 Central publication of anchor and resin testing details held by RCCs

Currently testing data is available on the DCA and CNCC website. Older test data is available on the BCA website. PK wonders if this data should be collated under the BCA banner (as well as appearing on regional CC websites). This should help to avoid duplicated effort by regional councils, when testing has already been done by a different regional council.

PK suggests a shared google drive, where regions can add any test data they are happy to share.

CJB states anything publicly shared should state the data is specifically for the purposes of BCA and the regional caving councils.

AK to set up a google drive.

Everyone to look at test data they/ their regional council holds that could be shared.

8.4 BCA Anchor Policy document update

PK asks if the BCA anchor policy document needs updating? It currently still mentions the ENT committee. It seems likely this group will talk through quite a few topics in the next few months, and could then choose to make changes to the anchor policy.

MR asks whether the current policy has a written rule concerning how often installers should have to do an update/ refresher course.

PK states DCA do currently insist on updates for installers who haven't been active in 3 years. IW thinks this a good idea, as installers should ideally be active and up to date.

PK checks the wording in the current anchor policy which currently states 'the list of installers shall be reviewed annually'.

The consensus is that this gives the regions sufficient space to form their own guidelines regarding keeping installers up to date.

8.5 Creating a document to give guidance on conducting future anchor or resin test beds

PK suggests this working group put together a guidance document for future testbeds, so that they have meaning. So if a region decides to adopt a new resin or a new anchor, they can go off and do a testbed to that guidance, and that will produce a statistically meaningful set of results that can then come back centrally and be used elsewhere. This should include how many to test, any variations and what statistical analysis is needed.

BM offers to find the information on test beds from existing documentation. He will send this to PK to review and collate.

PK suggests a future meeting to discuss this topic specifically.

8.6 Approval for using BP and/or IC anchors in non-limestone sites

PK asks what steps need to be taken to approve the use of current BCA anchors (BP and IC) in non-limestone rocks. This could involve a new test bed with dozens of anchors, in many possible rock types. Or follow the industry route using BS7883 which contains guidance on using an approved anchor in a rock type it wasn't initially tested in.

This is important as many BCA members are mine explorers and go underground in non-limestone areas.

Discussions throw up a lot to think about – hardness of the rock, cracks and fractures in the rock, pH and general conditions in the mines.

PK suggests a future meeting of a special interest group, specifically about this topic that those with an interest in this area could attend. Any decisions could then be raised at the anchor working group before being taken to BCA council for ultimate approval.

8.7 Methods for removing DMM Eco, PECO, BP and IC anchors when they need to be replaced

PK states it is important to know if anchors can be extracted from rock in way that leaves the rock still sound enough to take a new anchor. There is some documentation already on this, by PK and also Simon Wilson. This needs bringing together.

PK suggests starting with the old scheme anchors (DMM or PICO). The Anchor WG should be able to instruct installers on how to extract these anchors whilst preserving surrounding rock. Also there is a need to look at extraction of BP anchors, and in the future spits and other types of anchor.

PK suggests a practical session would be beneficial and suggests holding one on the BCA AGM weekend in June 2026. PK could put lots of anchors, of different types, into the testbed boulder at horseshoe quarry, and the group could then spend the Saturday (27th June) of the AGM weekend trialling different methods to extract these.

PK asks everyone in the group to share results and experiences of extracting various anchor types. PK can use this to form a list of methods to try at the AGM weekend.

9.0 Any Other Business

PK raises the terms of reference do not give specific guidance on how this working group makes decisions. He asks if members prefer a simple majority or want unanimous agreement?

AK points out the terms of reference do mention this:

(a) Decisions will be made by majority consensus and where consensus cannot be reached the issue shall be brought to the BCA National Council.

PK also asks how voting by the chair will be treated at Anchor WG meetings. Does he get a vote as any member of the committee, or does he just have a casting vote? PK doesn't mind either way, but would like clarity from the start.

There is some discussion about this. AK clarifies that anything without consensus at the AWG meeting can always be referred to BCA. Although hopefully this will never be needed, and anything without strong consensus in the group probably needs to be re-examined within the working group to work out how middle ground can be found.

A vote is held to decide how PK votes at AWG meetings. The options are:

1. Just casting a deciding vote, where necessary
2. Having a vote the same as other members of the committee.

The majority is for PK having a vote as per other members of the committee.

AK flags a UIA update on sports anchors he has shared. The bit on stress fluoride corrosion maybe relevant to mines, and would a good thing for members of the working group to be aware of.

MR notes that this group had the same discussion about how to define a loose anchor in 2020 and didn't come up with an answer at the time.

PK states he hopes this time round the AWG will have an answer within the 6 months.

PK suggests a standing agenda item of a fly around the regions, to prompt the regions to raise anything specific from their respective councils.

10.0 Details of the Next Meeting

Date for the next meeting will be: Monday the 30th March at 7pm

Before that date PK hopes to schedule one or more of the extra special interest discussions:

1. Anchor failure/ movement
2. approval for non-limestone sites
3. test beds for anchors.

These extra discussions will be open to anyone from the working group who wishes attend, but no-one should feel obligated to attend these.

Action Tracker

Action	Date	Owner	Details	Status
001	01/12/25	Everyone	Anchor Coordinators to share their current guidance to installers inspecting a reported defective anchor criteria, with a view to creating standardised AWG guidance on this topic.	open
002	01/12/25	PK	Produce a defective anchor central report spreadsheet. Update – Shared draft with IW for comment.	open
003	01/12/25	Everyone	Everyone to look at test data they/ their regional council holds that could be shared.	open
004	01/12/25	PK	Set up a meeting to discuss creating guidance on future anchor test beds	open
005	01/12/25	PK	Set up a meeting to discuss how to approve IC/BP anchors in non-limestone sites	open
006	01/12/25	PK	Set up an AWG workshop in the Peak District to look at the removal of BP anchors	open
007	01/12/25	Everyone	Send PK any notes you have on extracting anchors of any type	open