



Minutes for Anchor Working Group Meeting

30th March 2026 at 7pm

Held via Zoom

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1.0 Apologies for Absence

Mark Richards,

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	
	FoDCCAG	Matt Rees	MRe	Y
Other AWG Members	NAMHO	Steve Holding	SH	
		Bob Mehew	BM	Y
		Mark Richards	MR	
		Ian Patrick	IP	Y
	BCA	Chris Bolton	CJB	Y
Other Attendees	BCA	Aidan Kuhlmann	AK	Y

PK welcomes new member Matt Rees, who will be representing the Forest of Dean

Minutes compiled by Katie Eavis (KE), not present at the meeting, from the zoom recording.

3.0 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.

Minutes have already been accepted as approved.

December minutes not yet on the BCA website. CJB confirms they can be added to the website by CJB, AK and KE.

PK to send the December minutes to MRe.

CJB notes KE requested voting records get put in the comments as she is unable to see everyone's video.

PK will check over December minutes, remove note from KE re-voting, and send to AK to go on the website.

4.0 Matters Arising from the Previous Working Group Meeting

Everything already covered by agenda points.

5.0 BCA Anchor Defect/Failure Reports

An update from the Convenor on any reports of defective BCA anchors that have been submitted.

DCA – 1 wobbly anchor due to shrunken resin in Nickergrove Mine.

CNCC – 20 ish DMM early 1990s majority.

IW reports he has been looking at anchors in caves with reported problems and finding a high number with some sort of issue. He is unsure how best to report multiple defective anchors in one cave. PK agrees it is best not to produce multiple identical reports for different anchors in one cave. He suggests IW emails a single report and he will find a way of getting that into the records.

IW states some appear to have resin shrinkage but there are other issues such as wear. PK asks if CNCC are going to replace the anchors that are a big concern or are they considering proactive replacement of all loose anchors? IW is not sure the best way forward but feels CNCC could do with a larger team of active installers. PK says CNCC should ask if they want BCA involvement but are also happy for this to be driven by CNCC. IW feels it is better from just CNCC.

CJB asks how easy to pull out the recently removed defective anchors? IW states it has varied.

IW raises the difficulties of testing/quantifying the force used to remove loose anchors, as there are different types of movement, different amounts of movement, etc. It would be hard to meaningfully extrapolate from any results on samples.

Regions should consider their own risk in terms of when to replace loose anchors.

BM explains the reason a central record of loose/ defective anchors was started initially was so trends would be noticed if a specific anchor or resin was failing after a certain amount of time. Central records would make the trend easier to spot, and it could then be communicated to all regions who could check their anchors/ resin of a similar type or age. CJB adds that for this to be useful it is vital regions are accurately recording which type of anchors and resins have been used in caves.

IP says that replacement is not always as easy as just pulling it out and putting a new one in.

PK states there is some planned work coming up but more testing and practical work is needed.

IW responds that good rock is a limited resource and so every effort would be made to reuse the holes. IW believes CNCC has a procedure for replacing anchors in the same hole.

IW also thinks it is worth thinking about whether an anchor actually needs replacing, or whether the cave can be rigged safely without that anchor.

6.0 Anticipated BCA Claims (in the Next 6 Months)

As agreed with the BCA Treasurer, AWG has a budget it can allocate as it wishes. We can freely spend £200-£400 annually and could seek permission for up to £1000.

PK is planning a workshop for the BCA AGM weekend which will focus on removal of old anchor types, aiming to produce some guidance. This will involve some expense.

MRe asks whether anchors are ordered centrally or by the regions themselves? The new FoD region are looking to get some anchors.

BP anchors can be bought commercially by individual regions and costs claimed back from BCA. IC anchors are made to order, so CJB suggests it is better for BCA to order a batch which can be used by the regions.

CNCC is currently holding about 240 IC bolts, that are owned by BCA. These can be despatched to regions that request them.

MRe will contact PK/BM separately to discuss options for FoD, who are starting with a clean slate so can select the anchor type they wish to use.

BM adds IC anchors are more likely to be able to be cleanly extracted, which is a benefit in terms of conservation and also re-use of anchor holes, although there are no guarantees.

PK will add testing the extraction of IC anchors with the new resin to his testbed for the AGM weekend workshop.

7.0 Items for Discussion

7.1 Regional Input

Each region will be asked if it has any topics that are not currently on the agenda that they wish to discuss. Topics notified in advance will appear in the agenda here.

No points raised for discussion.

7.2 Criteria for defective anchors

Following on from the creation of a national record for reporting of defective anchors in the regions, it has been pointed out that there is some variation in the published criteria that regions are using. It would be good to come to agreement on some standard wording for use nationally if the members of the AWG can agree it.

PK has been re-drafting the statement 'safety information on resin bonded anchors' to incorporate wording about the responsibility covers carry for personally checking and ensuring they are happy to use anchors. And the importance of not using anchors if the user is not confident they are safe. PK suggests covers first test anchors with their fingers, and if they think they detect any movement using a carabiner to check. PK will send draft wording round for others to comment on.

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

An online folder in the BCA Google Drive has been created, and regions are asked to send any relevant documents they have to the Convenor for inclusion in this archive.

PK thanks BM for the historical data he has unearthed and sent round.

7.4 BCA Anchor Policy document update

PK suggest this might have to wait until the conclusion of some of the ongoing discussions. This will require an update, and in future can potentially be a more significant publication that incorporates all the documents AWG are intending to produce for the anchor scheme.

The existing anchor policy has been reviewed by the members of the anchor working group, who are happy to accept for the time being, without changes. However Equipment and Training working group should be read as Anchor working group. The AWG will plan to change and update the anchor policy at a future date, using the outcomes of the current groups discussions and testing.

The meeting was unanimous to leave this policy for now, with E and T WG being taken to mean AWG.

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

PK had produced a document prior to this meeting and circulated it for discussion.

CJB raises the issue caused by rounding to an integer, and approving anything equal or greater than 15KN. As then a result of 14.8 would be approved. PK suggests recording to one decimal place. Although this might overstate the precision of the testing data it would ensure that only results actually equal or greater than 15 count as a pass.

There is some discussion between PK and CJB about the scope of this document, specifically whether it includes new rock, and new anchors or just new resins. It is agreed this document will mention new resins, new substrates and new anchors but with a footnote to reference 'further guidance on approving new anchors and new substrates beyond limestone is in

preparation.' At later date these documents could be combined into one.

BM raises expanding this document to cover new anchor types. PK states he had avoided including this, in case regions could consider new anchors automatically approved without discussion with the AWG. BM notes the policy does allow regions to use a new anchor without needing approval. AK states this document is about conducting test beds, and drawing conclusion/approval for use is separate, and suggests it sticks to advising on how to conduct the science and not drawing conclusions.

There is more discussion on how to test/check the substrate for the test bed. PK suggests removing the more specific guidance he had included in the document and replacing it with a sentence stating, 'the general features of the rock used for the test bed should be representative of the installations conditions underground.'

PK will make the above changes to the document and email it out to those in this group. He proposes that the BCA Anchor Scheme Guidance on conducting testbeds document is approved, subject to the final OK on two minor edits, as discussed at this meeting. PK will email the revised wording around and everyone will have 2 weeks to raise any comments. After two weeks if there are no objections the document will automatically approved and can be published. Everyone (BM, CJB, PK, IP, IW, AK, VA, JS) is in favour of proceeding as above.

Document approved at meeting of the AWG, 30th March 2026 – subject to those minor edits.

7.6 Current approved resins and anchors

Can regional anchor coordinators please give a list of which resins they currently use?

PK knows of three resins currently being used by regional councils: Fisher FIS V 360S, Fisher FIS V Plus 360S and Fisher EM Plus 390S.

PK knows of two types of anchors currently being installed by RCCs: IC anchors and Bolt Products GP8-100-16A4. The A2 steel version is also approved but has not been used yet as it has less resistance to corrosion.

PK asks if the slate was actually approved for BP anchors?

BM states he cannot find any statement of approval in the minutes.

There is discussion about how to word what rock these anchors and resin can be used in and how to avoid either being overly restrictive or giving too free a rein to place anchors without adequate testing.

It is decided to just list approved anchors and resins for now, and leave rock out of it, as rock types will be coming under separate scrutiny by this group soon.

7.7 Guidance for using BP and/or IC anchors in non-limestone sites

Suggest this might have to wait until the conclusion of some of the above items.

This agenda item generates a lot of discussion around how involved the BCA/ AWG need to be in the use of anchors in non-limestone substrates or how much this can be left to the individual regions to decide. There is discussion about whether BCA needs to have an approval process, as it is BCA's name on the insurance, or whether it would be better producing a guidance document.

PK consults the anchor policy document and notes it doesn't specifically mention limestone, instead allowing regional councils to *'establish a procedure to consider and approve the choice of locations for the placing of designated anchors within their regions.'*

The policy also states: *'regional councils should be free to use alternative anchors, but they must take responsibility for gathering the evidence required to demonstrate the safety of any system which they choose.'*

PK suggests including resins and substrates in this sentence – so RCCs could follow the testbed guidance document to produce their own evidence to use anchors as suited their regions.

PK suggests the AWG consider producing guidance for approving anchors in non-karst rock so that the regions have a framework to follow, but not proscribe which substrates the anchors can be used in. As per the Anchor Policy, it would be for the regions to decide what substrates they were happy using anchors in, potentially using the testbed document to produce evidence to support their decision. The members at the meeting were in agreement with this.

BM suggests it would be good to involve Devon and Cornwall, plus NAMHO in these discussions as they encounter very different environments, which are often more hostile to bolts than limestone caves.

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

Workshop

At the BCA AGM weekend (27th/28th June) PK will run/ facilitate a workshop on the Saturday at Horseshoe quarry, Stoney Middleton. The aim would be to look at removing anchors – spits, expansion anchors, BP anchors, IC anchors etc. Please attend if you can. There will be photos and information collected to be circulated within this group afterwards.

Email PK if you have any comments or suggestions.

8.0 Any Other Business

CNCC holds all BCA IC anchors but needs to consider orders in future to maintain stock

CNCC holds the stock of 240 ish BCA IC anchors. Regions have recently requested quite a few. It would be good to get an idea of how many regions might want in the next couple of years so these could be ordered in good time/ sufficient quantities. IW requests regions that use IC anchors get in touch and let him know roughly how many they might want in the next couple of years.

CJB suggests CNCC do the ordering but BCA pay directly.

PK confirms DCA do not need IC anchors at this time as they have a stock of BP anchors to use up first.

If regions want BP anchors they can approach DCA to request some.

Action Tracker

Action	Date	Owner	Details	Status
005	01/12/25	PK	Set up a meeting to discuss guidance on using 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 and other anchors	open
007	01/12/25	Everyone	Send PK any notes you have on extracting anchors of any type	open
008	30/03/26	PK	Make the agreed small edits to the approved testbed guidance document and circulate for final comment. Publish 14 days later.	closed
009	30/03/26	PK	Set up a meeting to discuss defective anchor criteria	open

9.0 Details of the Next Meeting

27th July 2026 at 7pm online