

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM

SWINSTO HOLE & SIMPSON POT PULL-THROUGHS

As many of you will know, Ian Patrick has been working, with Committee approval, to partially re-anchor Swinsto Hole and Simpson Pot for better pull-through. Work in Swinsto was completed last year (and has received considerable praise), and work in Simpson started this year, completing down to Storm Pot before the summer holidays. Ian has recently finished the job, including the infamous Slit Pot and Swinsto Great Aven, the former being notorious for stuck ropes (and some stuck cavers).

Ian has advised that the optimum solution for both pitches would require the anchors to be linked with chains to a master point, and he has installed anchors in anticipation of this. The current solution has all sorts of tat in place, which the chains would replace and provide a long-term solution.

You will be aware that the only fixed aids CNCC has historically supported are stainless steel resin bonded anchors. However, we have (pleasingly, in my opinion) started to cautiously diverge from this where an alternative solution is better, including ground-spike belays (eg at Death's Head) and displaying relevant non-CNCC anchors on selected topos. For CNCC to endorse and install chains would be a step further. Ian has discussed this with the DCA's fixed aid expert Pete Knight (chains are, I believe, used in Derbyshire and South Wales) and has identified the necessary specifications to ensure such a chain was of the correct material and specification for this purpose, including fully rated and certified.

Ian has advised that to install these chains as required across the two pitches would need three chains at an estimated total cost of £300. I had a lengthy discussion with Ian by phone and explained that the bigger question here is whether CNCC wants to diversify our fixed aid provisions into chains, for the rare situations where the installers team feel this provides the best solution.

Ahead of the meeting, Ian will engage with the installers group for thoughts and opinions. There is already some discussion ongoing, and one installer has proposed an alternative solution without chains. It is possible they will come to the meeting with a solution that makes this agenda item unnecessary.

However, if an agreeable solution is reached with the installers that involves the use of one or more chains, I would like to ask CNCC Committee to consider approving us supporting such fixed aids, subject to appropriate due-diligence including:

- (a) Keeping full installation records
- (b) Ensuring appropriate specification
- (c) Designing a quick and simple pre-use inspection regime
- (d) Ensuring our topos and descriptions clearly identify this as a non-standard CNCC fixed aid and to provide the necessary information to allow cavers to make a pre-use inspection and report any concerns.

Finally, I am conscious that this has come after the agenda deadline and is a late addition, so fully accept that if enough club reps feel they need to take this back to their clubs for discussion (and do not have sufficient time to do so before 26 October), we may need to park this until the January meeting.