

Aldery Cliff briefing note

Following the widely reported, unsanctioned work carried out at Aldery Cliff over the winter of 2016/17 a wide range of views and opinions have been expressed which has helped inform the BMC's Land Management Group. A full position statement on the situation can be found on the BMC website: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-position-statement-aldery-cliff>

The individual responsible has been contacted and asked to desist from further work at the crag – he has agreed to this. The BMC relies heavily on volunteers to help in many areas of our work and access is no exception. However it is crucial that **before** any work takes place on BMC land, that the BMC is approached for permission first. The work required on our sites is varied with some being suitable for volunteers, whilst other work can require professional contractors if complex or dangerous. Of course for any potentially contentious work the BMC would always seek to consult with the local area first.

Concerns were raised about disturbance to bats in the route Mitre Crack, but following advice from an ecologist, it is highly unlikely that the bats will have been present in this summer roost during the period the work was taking place. Discussion now needs to focus on what action (if any) the BMC should take regarding the lack of in situ anchors at the top of the crag.

8 bolted abseil stations were placed during the unsanctioned work to replace the previous tree lower offs that had been removed during the work. On inspection by the BMC's Technical Officer, these anchors were found to be unsuitable for use as climbing anchors and have since been removed. This means that for the time being there will be no lower off/abseil points in situ at the crag and climbers visiting the crag should be prepared to either top out on the routes (through the sometimes chossy/grassy top sections) or pre place a rope/sling from a tree at the top to lower off/abseil from.

The key question to consider is what should be done about the lack of fixed anchors at the top of routes? The main realistic options are:

1. Leave the crag without fixed equipment to lower/abseil from – climbers will have to top out on routes or pre-place their own rope to lower from.
2. Replace the bolts with good quality, stainless resin bolts, maillons and rings which will have good longevity and comply with our bolt policy.
3. It may be possible to place stakes at the top (assuming there is sufficient depth of soil before bedrock is hit – but there is no way to guarantee this) if the meeting feels that the chossy top outs are acceptable but additional anchors are required at the top besides the existing large trees.

There may be other options, but any suggested must be realistic. If there is a decision from the area that fixed gear should be installed, it needs to be reliable, trustworthy and long lasting. One example suggestion has been placement of boulders at the top of the crag – this would not only be incredibly difficult, but also wouldn't solve the issue of topping out.

The LMG need a clear direction from the Peak Area meeting about the wishes of local climbers for the future of this crag – please come along to the meeting on 7th June at the Maynard Arms, Grindleford and make your views heard.