

Country Wide Weekends

Risk Assessment

This report considers the potential risks and dangers involved in all aspects of the operation of Country Wide Weekends. The information contained within the following pages should not be viewed as 'static' but a 'dynamic' reporting system for operating procedures and will require updating from time to time as both activities change and the centre develops.

Comment [BG1]: Country Wide Weekends

Country Wide Weekends caters for a wide customer base. Whilst it is recognised that certain risks are more likely to relate to young participants, it should be noted that participants maybe of any age and this report should therefore be read with an open mind regarding the use of the words 'youngsters, participants, guests and staff'.

Each risk is identified and an index number given according to the likelihood of that occurrence reflecting the level of anticipated risk.

Index:

- (1) Very Likely**
- (2) Probable**
- (3) Possible**
- (4) Unlikely**
- (5) Extremely Unlikely**

It must be noted that the assignment of a particular index number is within the perceived level of risk given the operational procedures for the activities being undertaken. For example whilst it might be highly probable that youngsters will sustain injury from falling off a cliff face, the operational procedures in force recognise the dangers and are structured to avoid this occurrence and hence a lesser index will be attributed to this occurrence. Hence it is important to read these assessments in conjunction with the operational procedures for each activity.

Activity Areas:

1. Climbing & Abseiling

The following potential hazards have been identified as being particular to this activity for both wall and crag sessions.

1a). Equipment failure-failure of critical equipment, belay devices, anchor points, rope, harnesses which could lead to injury/death resulting from falling from either a tower, climbing wall or a cliff. (5)

1b). Unsupervised use of the abseil/climbing wall and/or cliff sites could result in injury/death through falling without any safety equipment in place to arrest the fall. (3)

1c). Participants not listening to important safety instructions and information could lead to minor injury through inappropriate behaviour during the session. For example participants might approach an artificial wall or cliff base without appropriate protection afforded by a helmet and sustain injury from falling equipment or stones. (4)

1d). Poor or unsafe instruction - poor instruction or operation of the climbing tower or at the climbing area could lead to serious injury or death to participants. (5)

In all situations above in the event of an incident it would almost certainly involve participants though could involve staff for items 1a) & 1b).

Policies in place to minimise these potential risks:

1.1a). All equipment is of an approved type and marked with the 'CE' mark where appropriate. All kit is logged stringently allowing session by session inspection. An annual stock check is made and any suspect equipment or 'dated' items are discarded and the kit logs amended accordingly. Any site specific maintenance is recorded.

1.1b). No unsupervised sessions are run at wall, tower or crag locations. We do not hire out climbing/abseil equipment.

1.1c). All staff employed by CWW are experienced in working with young people and are able to convey the necessary safety information in such a way as to be coherent and understandable. All staff are trained in group control and if they feel that an individual is behaving in such a manner as to be a danger to themselves or others then they will not allow them to continue with the activity. All leaders of groups that fall within the scope of the licence in either of the activities will be appropriately qualified according to the NGB guidelines, in this case the Single Pitch Award (formerly SPSA). Assistants may hold NGB trainee status or site-specific in-house training.

Comment [BG2]:

1.1d) All staff and instructors either hold nationally recognised qualifications for climbing/abseiling (SPSA/SPA or above) and/or receive in-house training. Relevant safety information and reference sheets on all centre equipment is held in the centre.

2. Archery

The following potential hazards have been identified as being particular to this activity.

2a). Participants not following safety instructions could lead to injury of themselves and others, either entering the shooting area during shooting, or by shooting into a non-designated shooting area. (4)

2b). Inappropriate clothing - this causes potential risk, for example long earrings, long hair neck chains can become caught in the bow string. (5)

2c). Faulty equipment - Faulty equipment could lead to injury, examples being bosses falling from stands, cracked bows snapping under tension causing injury, arrows breaking. (4)

2d). Risk of people entering the shooting area who are not involved in the session. (5)

2e). Unsupervised use of the equipment and/or range - there is a risk of injury through the use of the archery equipment when not being supervised by a qualified member of staff. (5)

2f). Poor or unqualified instruction could lead to serious injury and damage to equipment through incorrect use and operating procedures. (5)

All of the identified risks could relate to participants, whether guests or staff. Point a, is more likely to relate specifically to youngsters.

Policies in place to minimise these potential risks:

2.2a). All staff employed by CWW are experienced in working with young people and are able to convey the necessary safety information in such a way as to be coherent and understandable. All members of staff are trained in group control and if they feel that an individual is behaving in such a manner as to be a danger to themselves or others then they will not allow them to continue with the activity. Only staff holding the NGB 'Leaders' award are permitted to lead sessions and any assistants will have completed the in-house training programs to the satisfaction of Ruth/Mike before being permitted to assist on the range.

Comment [BG3]:

2.2b). All equipment is checked on a sessional basis by the 'Leader' and any suspect equipment is discarded or repaired as appropriate.

2.2c). Warning signs are positioned as appropriate at the entrance to the archery area during all archery sessions. The boundaries of the range are marked/taped as necessary appropriate signs are in position for good measure.

2.2d). The range instructors afford adequate advice on suitable clothing types. Visiting groups are sent a clothing list for all activities prior to their visit.

Instructors and range staff are vigilant during sessions to ensure that risks are kept to a minimum.

2.2e). All archery equipment is kept away from guests unless under supervision on the range

2.2f). Only staff holding the Grand National Archery Society 'Leaders Award' for archery are permitted to lead sessions on the range. Members of staff who have completed the in-house training programme to the satisfaction of Mike/Ruth may help as assistants on the range.

3. Caving

The following potential hazards have been identified as being particular to this activity.

3a). Falling - participants in caving may sustain injury or cause injury to others by slipping both underground and on the approach route to the cave. (3)

3b). Participants may be injured or trapped by falling rock in the cave system. (5)

3c). Weather - Different conditions might prevail once a particular session has started which might result in the case of excessive rain in flooding of a system or difficulty in passing a particular section of a cave. (5)

3d). Equipment failure - this might include safety lines, anchors, helmets and belts. (5)

3e). Light failure - this might lead to injury resulting from movement in the dark. (4)

3f). The use of inappropriate clothing might result in injury. (5)

3g). There is the possibility of infection from Weil's disease (Leptospirosis) through contact with infected watercourses. (5)

3h). There is a risk of drowning particularly if a fall in water occurs. (5)

3i). There is a risk of injury sustained from use of the changing facilities provided. This might be from a swinging door or from the changing area floors. (4)

Policies in place to minimise these potential risks:

3.3a). Suitable footwear is supplied to all participants. Appropriate staff prior to particularly known hazardous areas give instruction. Care is given to group control on the approach to and returns from the caving venue. Instructions are given in the correct use of any safety handlines placed.

3.3b). Regular records of all trips are maintained logging changing conditions underground. Regular contact is maintained with local clubs and points of reference for cave access and conditions. Radon incidence reports are monitored and any advice obtained would be followed. Regular trips by Mike & Ruth are undertaken to ensure the continued suitability of a site for group use.

3.3c). In depth local knowledge is available on cave sites from Mike and Ruth and is available to all staff. A local forecasting centre is used for weather forecasts. All these aspects are covered in the in-house staff training programme.

3.3d). Sessional logs are kept of kit use, condition and lamp logs are kept which ensure regular equipment inspection and maintenance records are kept. All suspect or defective kit is discarded.

3.3e). Lights are fully logged on a sessional basis and faults rectified. Simple maintenance is covered in the staff training programme. A spare light unit is carried on all novice trips.

3.3f). All participants are supplied with protective and approved caving clothing and footwear.

3.3g). Leaders undertaking trips in wet caves will have received additional in-house training to cover the increased hazards of these venues. Particular attention is paid towards 'known' trouble spots (for example the Swildon's 20ft). This will include safe-guarding climbs and one to one monitoring of passing certain cave sections.

3.3h). All participants are advised of the risks of infection with Leptospirosis both regular and bovine and are advised to take showers after the trips. Gloves are provided where appropriate and all exposed cuts are covered before the trip commences.

3.3i). All participants are advised to keep clear of swinging doors and of the nature of the floor surfaces during kit distribution.

3.3j). All staff employed by CWW are experienced in working with young people and are able to convey the necessary safety information in such a way as to be coherent and understandable. All staff receive training in group control and if they feel that an individual is behaving in such a manner as to be a danger to themselves or others then they will not allow them to continue with the activity. All sessions are led by staff with the appropriate NGB qualification, in this case the National Caving Association, Local Cave leaders award at Level 1. (NCA/LCLA1). Assistants may have either undergone LCLA training with an approved assessor or have undergone in-house training with Mike and completed their training to his satisfaction for leading in 'Goatchurch Cavern', Burrington Combe or to work as an assistant in other venues on Mendip.

Comment [BG4]:

4. Kayaking

The following potential hazards have been identified as being particular to this activity.

4a). When guests are paddling close to one another, there is risk of minor injury from paddles and other canoes. (3)

4b). During session, capsizes may occur which could lead to mild hypothermia. (4)

4c). There is potential for injury from unexposed hazards on the river-bed when capsizing and/or wading/walking on the river bed. (4)

4d). There is the possibility of infection from the river, namely Weil's disease animal carcasses, animal faeces and from blue green algae forming on the water. (5)

4e). Drowning is a possibility from falling into the river or after a capsize. 5)

4f). A hazard from fishing lines and/or hooks from occasional fishermen. (5)

4g). Minor injury may occur from tripping during portaging of kayaks up short steep muddy banks particularly during seal launching. (3/4)

4h). During seal launching, minor injury may occur from paddle hitting face if obstructed by thick undergrowth. (4)

4i). During session minor injury is potential from brambles/nettles on river-banks. (3)

4j). There is potential of minor injury when guests are dry paddling from paddles hitting bodies and during warm up exercises. (4)

Policies in place to minimise these potential risks:

4.4a). All participants are provided with approved buoyancy aids whilst canoeing together with a wetsuit, wetsuit boots, helmet and canoe cag. All canoe staff are qualified to at least the BCU 3* and hold both first aid and the canoe safety test. Guests are asked to wear long sleeved thermal tops under cags. Staff act quickly to ensure guests are out of the water quickly in the event of a swim and spare clothing is always carried. Hot drinks are carried together with food on all trips.

4.4b). Guests are kept apart to avoid collision and paddles clashing. Paddles are removed during raft games.

4.4c). The river-bed is regularly inspected for submerged hazards. The river-bed is soft. All guests and staff are provided with footwear.

4.4d). Guests are asked to cover up open cuts and bruises. Guests are advised to shower after all river trips and all clothing including wetsuits/boots are disinfected after every trip.

4.4e). Groups are kept away from fisherman whenever they might be present. Coaches are made aware of specific sites in which fisherman might be present.

4.4f). Guests are kept within site of coaches at all times whilst on the river.

4.4g). Coaches assist guests while portaging canoes if appropriate.

4.4h). Special instructions are given by coaches prior to seal launching. Additional instructions covering use of spray-deck, it's release, paddle position

and a refresher on capsizing drill are given prior to launching. Rafted launches are used for youngsters.

One coach remains on rescue duty on the water throughout the launching process.

4.4i). Additional briefing of guests occurs upon arrival at the river side prior to disembarking the transport to cover any prevailing circumstances

4.4j). All staff employed by CWW are experienced in working with young people and are able to convey the necessary safety information in such a way as to be coherent and understandable. All staff receive training in group control and if they feel that an individual is behaving in such a manner as to be a danger to themselves or others is not permitted to continue on the session. All sessions are led by staff with the appropriate NGB qualification, in this case the minimum requirement for leading a small group on the river is the completion of the Level 2 Coach training course, holding an appropriate first aid qualification, the Canoe safety test and relevant local knowledge of the venue.

Comment [BG5]:

7. CANOEING (OPEN BOATS)

The following potential hazards have been identified as being particular to this activity.

7a). When guests are paddling close to one another, there is risk of minor injury from paddles and other canoes. (3)

7b). During session, capsizes may occur which could lead to mild hypothermia. (4)

7c). There is potential for injury from unexposed hazards on the river bed when capsizing and/or wading/walking on the river bed. (4)

7d). There is the possibility of infection from the river, namely, Weil's disease, animal carcasses, animal faeces and from blue green algae forming on the water. (5)

7e). Drowning is a possibility from falling into the river or after a capsizing. (5)

7f). A hazard from fishing lines and/or hooks from occasional fishermen. (5)

7g). Minor injury may occur from tripping during portaging/launching/egressing of canoes particularly up short steep muddy banks. (3/4)

7h). Injury is potential to swimming capsized victims from loose boat, rescuing boat and or floating flotsam/untethered containers. (4)

7i). There is potential of minor injury when guests are dry paddling from paddles hitting bodies and during warm up exercises. (4)

7j). Minor injury is potential from lifting/dropping boats whilst unloading and loading trailers/roofracks. (3)

7k). Injury is potential with problems associated with handling ropes (painters, throwlines). (3/4)

7l). Injury is potential from being hit by pole whilst in use. (4)

7m). Injury is potential from hitting river hazards particularly on moving water. (4)

7n). Injury is potential from wildlife particularly swans. (4)

7o). There is a risk of sunburn/dehydration particularly where paddlers are paddling for day(s) i.e training for an expedition/assessment.

7.p). During times when groups are under supervision but unaccompanied (part of training/assessment/course) the above risks apply in addition to the following:

There is a risk the group may become separated.

The group may not be aware of their location, which would become a potential risk in the event of an emergency egress due to an emergency.

There is a risk of paddlers becoming exhausted.

In the event of a boat becoming pinned or caught on river obstructions there is a risk of rescuees/rescuers being injured.

There is a risk of kit becoming wet.

Policies in place to minimise these potential risks:

7.7). The above risks are significantly minimised by appropriate training and practise, including emergency procedures and appropriate kit to cover themselves and the group. All aspects of expedition open boating/canoe camping at the appropriate level are covered during training sessions/days.

In addition to this the group will have instructors, supervisors and responsible persons contact numbers with them. The group would be checked in at regular intervals during the day(s).

7.7a). Boats are encouraged to keep apart to avoid collision and paddles clashing. Doubles are instructed/trained how to avoid paddle collision.

7.7b). All participants are provided with approved buoyancy aids whilst canoeing together with a wetsuit, wetsuit boots, helmet and canoe cag. Guests are asked to wear long sleeved thermal tops under cags. Circumstances where wetsuits are not appropriate participants are advised to wear warm layers with a windproof top cover. Instructors act quickly to ensure guests are out of the water quickly in the event of a capsize and spare clothing is always carried. Hot drinks are carried together with food on all trips.

7.7c). The river-bed is regularly inspected for submerged hazards. The river-bed is soft. All guests and staff are provided with footwear.

7.7d). Guests are asked to cover up open cuts and bruises. Guests are advised to shower after all river trips and all clothing including wetsuits/boots are disinfected after every trip, or make every effort to rinse accordingly.

7.7e). Guests are kept within site of instructors and are instructed what to do in the event of a capsize.

7.7f). Groups are kept away from fisherman whenever they might be present. Instructors are made aware of specific sites in which fisherman might be present.

7.7g). Instructors assist guests while portaging canoes if appropriate. Participants are encouraged to work in pairs whilst manoeuvring boats.

7.7h). Capsize victims are briefed/trained to avoid getting trapped between boats, containers are tethered to boat, participants are provided with protective hats, instructors/rescuers are trained and practised in swimmer/boat recovery.

7.7i). Guests are kept a safe distance away from each other. During games/warm up guests are instructed to put hats on.

7.7j). Staff/guests/participants are trained/practised in the safe handling of craft off/on trailers/roof racks and encouraged to help each other. Hats are worn during this activity. Staff would supervise this or undertake the task themselves.

7.7k). Staff/guests/participants are trained/practised in the use of rope handling.

Comment [BG6]:

7.7l). Participants are trained/practised in the use of a pole.

7.7m). Participants are trained/practised in paddling/boat handling and generally running the river. Participants wear protective clothing and safety kit.

7.7n). Participants are advised to pass wildlife quietly and with the least amount of commotion and to take a wide berth if possible.

7.7o). Participants are advised on how to deal with warm/hot weather conditions. i.e, wearing sun-hats/covering up/sun-block, cream/regular water intake.

All staff employed by CWW are experienced in working with young people and adults and are able to convey the necessary safety information in such a way as to be coherent and understandable. All staff receive training in group control and if they feel that an individual is behaving in such a manner as to be a danger to themselves or others is not permitted to continue on the session/course. All sessions are led by experienced staff and with the appropriate NGB qualifications along with the Canoe safety test and first aid qualification.

Non-Activity Areas:

1. Vehicles/Transport

The following hazards are considered to be particularly related to this area of the centre's operation:

1a). It is possible that the vehicles could become involved in a Road Traffic Incident. The extent of the likely damage and/or injury from such an incident is extremely difficult to quantify, but could range from no injury to widespread destruction and multiple death. (4)

- 1b). Mechanical failure of the vehicle could result in damage and injury: brake failure, tyre failure etc. (5)
- 1c). Mechanical failure or an accident could result in a fire on board the vehicle. (5)
- 1d). The potential for an incident/accident increases if the driver is distracted from driving by the passengers. (5)
- 1e). Due to the height of the vehicles used (often Landrovers and Special Landrover Derivatives) access to and from the vehicles could result in minor injury. (4)
- 1f). Minor injury could be sustained from windows and when closing doors/tailgates. (4)
- 1g). Major injury could be sustained by inappropriate driving of the vehicles. (5)
- 1h). Injury may occur due to restricted access to the vehicle resulting from towing of trailers. (5)
- 1i). Minor injury as a result of inadequate loading of both trailers (canoe trailer/mountain bike trailer) and/or roof racks. (5)

All of the above potential risk factors could apply to any person on board the vehicle. In the event of an RTA other drivers, passengers and pedestrians could also be involved. It is likely that some hazards might apply more to children than adults due to less developed perception of risk or danger. It is extremely difficult to accurately assess the level of risk and potential severity of the outcome if the vehicles were involved in an RTA as too many external factors are involved and are beyond the control of the organisation.

Policies in place to minimise these potential risks:

1.1a). The vehicles used are all fitted with forward facing seats in compliance with the Road Traffic Act Feb 1997 and fitted with seat belts. Belts are worn at all times and drivers/instructors are instructed to check that all occupants of the vehicle are correctly seated and belted in before departure. All doors are securely fastened and checked before departure.

1.1b). A fire extinguisher is carried in all vehicles. Usually located within easy reach of the driver. First aid kits are carried by instructors for all activities and by definition will always be carried in the vehicle. Staff are made aware of the location and type of fire appliance carried and the procedure to follow in the event of an incident on the Road.

1.1c). regular vehicle checks are carried out by Mike and logged in the transport notebook carried with each vehicle. Leased vehicles are serviced under contract weekly.

1.1d). A second adult instructor always travels in the vehicle when more than 4 passengers are carried. Control is therefore maintained over the passengers without the risk of the driver being distracted. Should the driver feel it necessary due to undue distraction the vehicle will be stopped. All drivers are made aware of this policy.

1.1e). All drivers of the vehicles must supply their driving licence details for clearance with our insurers and will be over 21 years of age. In addition to holding relevant license categories to drive, all drivers will also have to demonstrate sound driving practice on sessions under the scrutiny of Mike & Ruth before they will be permitted to drive on trips without guidance.

1.1f). Guests are requested to remain onboard the vehicle whilst trailers are removed prior to disembarking. All trailers and roof racks are loaded whilst guests are clear of the vehicles.

1.1g). Steps are provided for boarding the vehicles. Where these are not fitted to the vehicle's the driver will pull up next to an appropriate 'mounting block' so as to facilitate easy access to the vehicle.

2. Changing Facilities/Showers/Toilet/Other Areas Including Stores

The following hazards are considered to be particularly related to this area of the centre's operation:

2a). There is the risk of minor injury being sustained if guests enter store areas.(4)

2b). There is the risk of minor injury from slippage on floors and/or steps whilst moving between changing areas. (4)

Policies in place to minimise these potential risks:

2.2a). There is no guest access permitted to store/workshop areas at Bridge Farm.

2.2b). Staff point out obvious hazards on the site as part of the introduction to the group, this includes 'no go' areas, the toilets facilities, changing areas and the routes between them. The steps are pointed out.

2.2c). Floors are kept as dry as possible and only mopped after guests have departed. The shower at Bridge Farm is used in emergency (cold guests from Canoeing for example) or for staff use only. The toilet is used in a similar fashion; essentially a staff facility, but will regularly be used by guests of the centre who are caught short.

2.2d). Changing room/store doors that are free to swing are all fitted with retaining hooks which are used on windy days; the hazard is pointed out by attending session staff.

2.2e). All cleaning fluids are kept in staff only areas. Instructors are requested to check all guest areas for hazards before guests are permitted into the changing areas.

2.2f). Staff are instructed to request guests to remove all personal baggage and belongings from the floor areas and correctly stow them prior to sessions. All changing areas are adequately lit for late and evening sessions.

2.2g). Vehicles are parked away from changing areas/kit areas prior to guests arriving. After being checked out of a kiting up or changing area centre staff request guests to embark their specific transport so as not to be freely wandering in a potentially busy area.

3. Fire

In the event of a fire there is the potential for widespread damage and multiple death and/or serious injury. The following points show particular areas of operation where there is a potential risk of fire and other associated dangers.

3a). Smoking discarded cigarettes or matches in the Farm buildings or yard area could trigger a fire. (5)

3b). Panic resulting from the onset of an incident could lead to a risk of injury through pushing and associated hazards in exiting the buildings. (4)

3c). There is a possibility that guests could remain in changing areas after the onset of an incident and sustain injury a result.(5)

Policies in place to minimise these potential risks:

3.3a). No staff or guests are permitted to smoke within buildings at Bridge Farm. Where guests are seen smoking they are asked to extinguish all cigarettes and dispose of them properly.

3.3b). Appliances are regularly inspected and cleaned

3.3c). Fire drills are practised in accordance with the Fire procedures set out in the Procedures Manual.

3.3d). Fire extinguishers are situated in all store areas, the kitchen is supplied with both a fire blanket and dry powder extinguisher.

3.3e). In the event of the alarm being raised for a fire, staff are instructed to check all changing areas, toilets and showers for guests and other staff.

3.3f). Fire notices are positioned in the guest changing areas and within the stores at Bridge Farm.